



Eric Kenneway

# FINGERS, KNUCKLES AND THUMBS

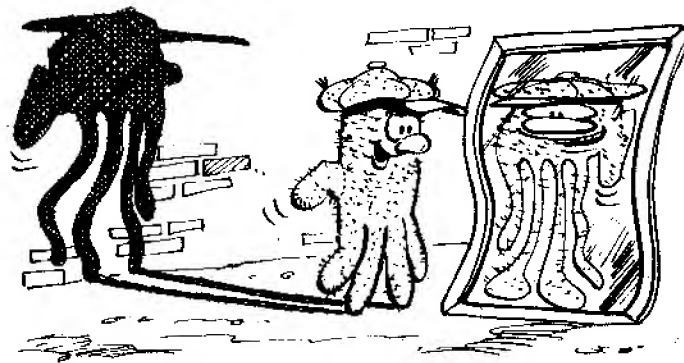


Tricks and games  
for hands

# Fingers, Knuckles and Thumbs

**Eric Kenneway**

*Illustrated by Alan Rogers*



## Foreword

'Don't just sit there twiddling your thumbs' – perhaps that has been said to you at some time. It is a common expression which implies that 'twiddling your thumbs' is just about the silliest thing anybody could do; that doing anything else would be a more interesting or worthwhile way of spending the time.

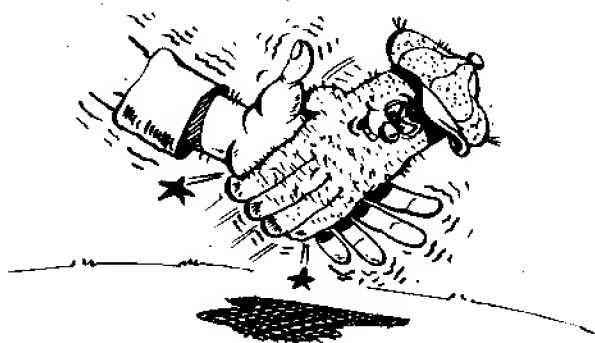
Well, this book will show you that there is more than one way of twiddling your thumbs. It will show you, too, that there are other things to do with your thumbs – and fingers – besides twiddling them. It is surprising what you can do with a pair of hands and nothing else at all. You can play finger games, make pictures, do sums and create all kinds of magic. One word of warning: you can also catch out your friends with some of these tricks. Do not try to catch them out too often or they may become distrustful of you and be unwilling to join you in a finger game for which you really do need them as partners.

Many of the following ideas will be useful to you when you are unable to get on with your usual activities; when you are confined to bed through illness or when travelling on a long journey. There will be other ideas that you will want to try on your family and friends straight away; so don't just sit there twiddling your thumbs. . . .

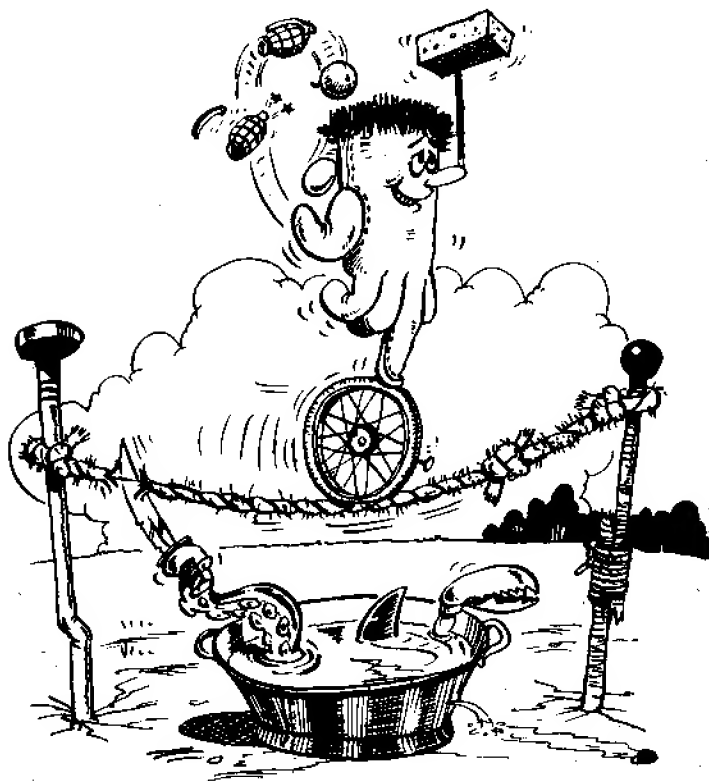


## Thanks

I am indebted to Seishiro Yuasa of the Japan Children's Play Research Centre for first introducing me to the subject of finger play; and to Samuel Randlett for introducing me to much of the literature. Martin Gardner's work on impromptu magic has once again proved invaluable. I also thank John French, Robert Harbin, Elsie Hill and her son David, for suggesting ideas which are included in this collection.



## A handful of things to do by yourself

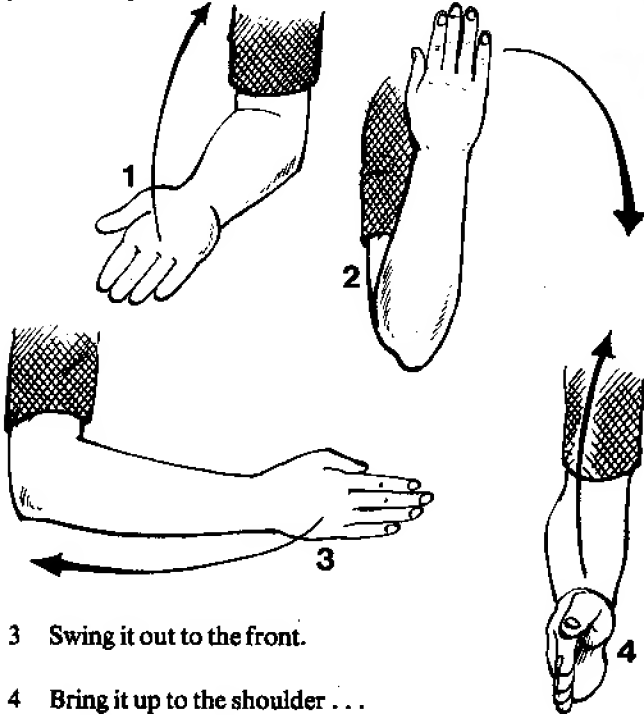


## Mysterious hand turn

Did you know that you can turn your hand over without actually turning your hand over? If that sounds like nonsense, try the following sequence of moves, keeping your wrist stiff at all times.

1 Start by holding your hand palm *upwards*. Then bring your hand up to the shoulder on the same side.

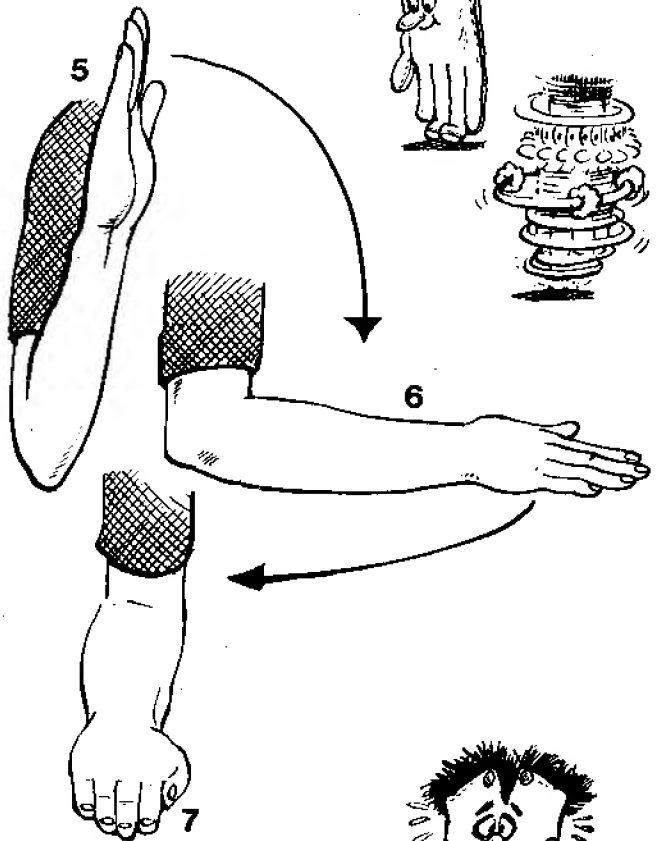
2 Bring it down to waist level holding your arm across your tummy.



3 Swing it out to the front.

4 Bring it up to the shoulder ...

5 ... down to waist level ...



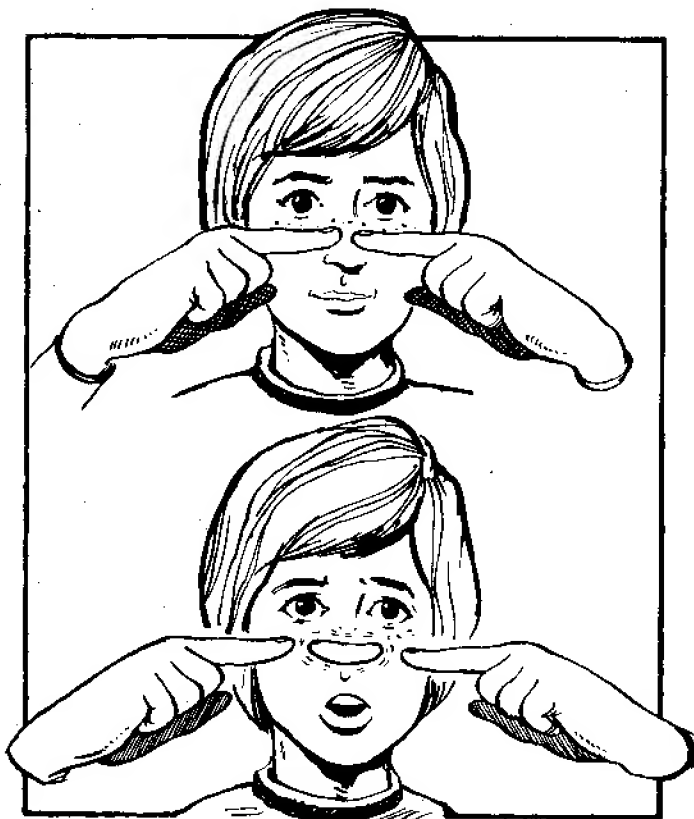
6 ... and out to the front.

7 Your hand is now facing palm *downwards*. How did that happen?



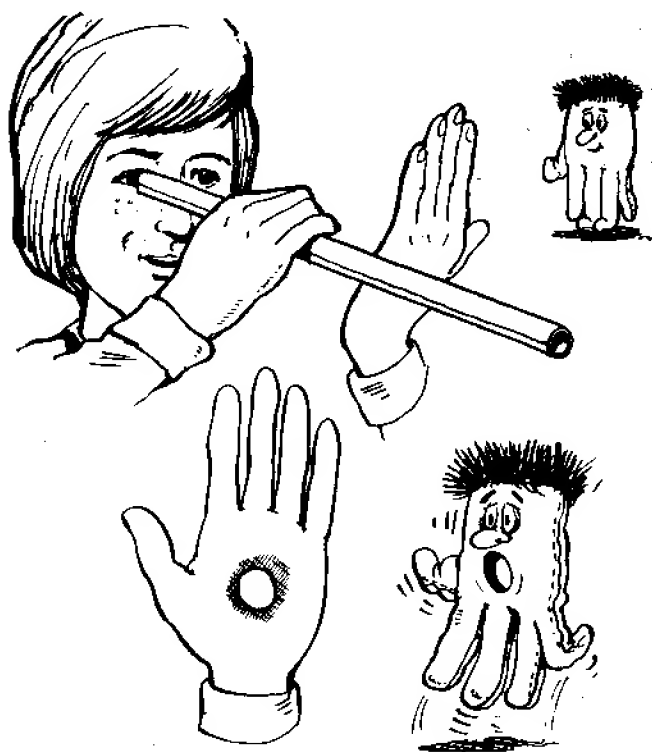
### Floating sausage

- 1 Bring the tips of your forefingers together and hold your hands about 20cm in front of your nose.
- 2 Pull your fingertips apart slightly. Look through the space between them, focusing your eyes on the far side of the room, and a little 'floating sausage' will appear.



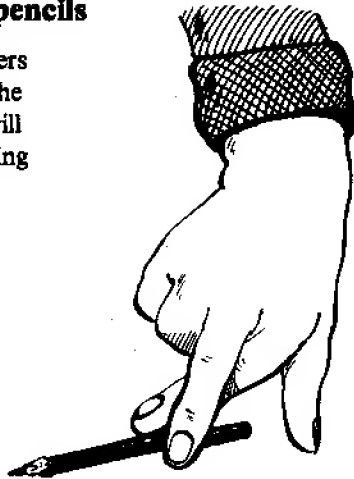
### Hole in the hand

- 1 Roll up a sheet of paper into a tube and hold it to one eye. Place your free hand upright against the side of the tube with the palm facing you. (Make sure this hand is not hidden from your view by the hand which is holding the tube.) Keep both eyes open and focus them on the far side of the room.
- 2 You appear to have a hole in the middle of your hand.



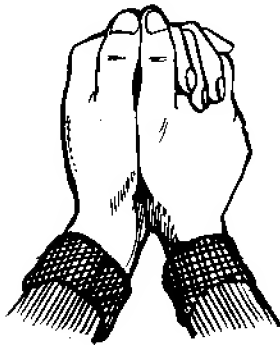
### One pencil – two pencils

Cross two of your fingers and run the insides of the tips along a pencil. It will feel as if you are touching two pencils.



### Owl hoot

1 Make a hollow ball of your hands by cupping them together, taking care that you do not leave any gaps between your fingers or between the heels of your hands. Leave just a narrow cavity between the joints of your thumbs.



2 Place your lips against the upper part of your thumbs, with your lower lip covering the top end only of the cavity; then blow. This should produce the sound of an owl hooting.

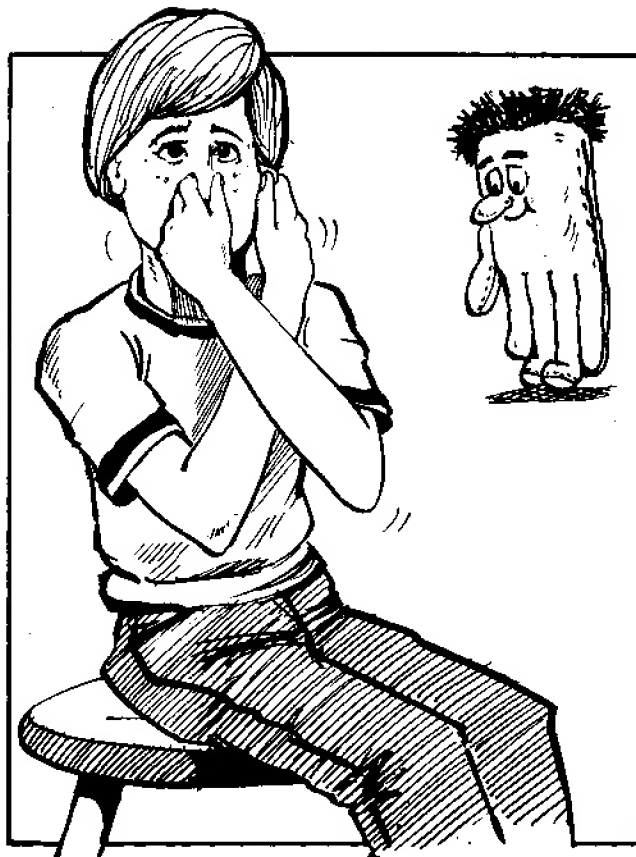


3 By moving the middle finger of your left hand, you should be able to produce various notes.

## Slap your knees and change hands

1 Hold your right ear with your left hand and your nose with your right hand. Let go . . .

2 . . . slap your knees . . .



3 . . . and take hold of your left ear with your right hand and your nose with your left hand.

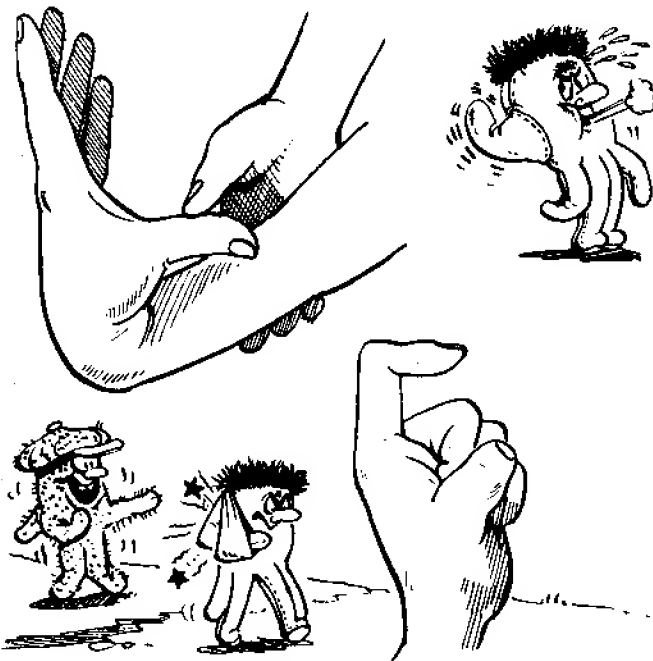
Repeat these moves. Slap your knees and change hands; slap your knees and change hands as quickly as you can. – if you can.



## Can you do this?

Some people can bend their hands and fingers into positions which other people find impossible. Can you do the following stunts? Even if you cannot, you will find that some of your friends can.

- 1 Can you bend your hand so that your thumb touches your wrist?
- 2 Can you bend your forefinger at the middle joint only, so that the two top sections are rigid?



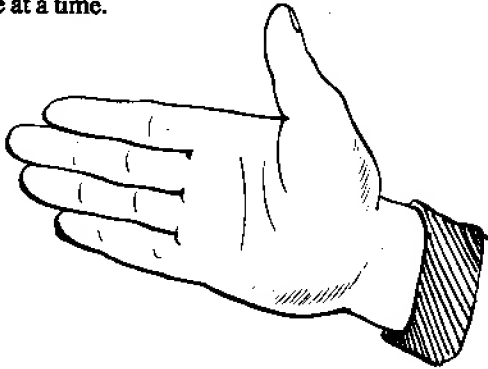
- 3 Can you curl your little finger over your third finger, your third finger over your middle finger, and your middle finger over your forefinger – like this?



- 4 Can you bring your little finger and forefinger together? Even more difficult, can you bring your two inner fingers up through the space formed in this way?

## And can you do this?

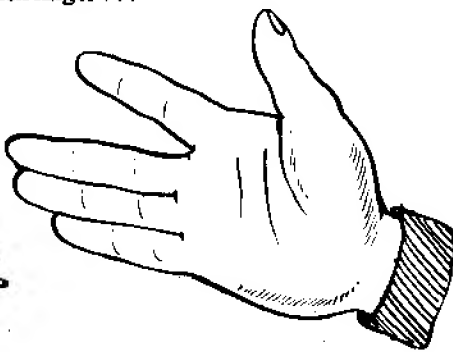
1 Hold your hand like the one in the drawing and lift your fingers one at a time.



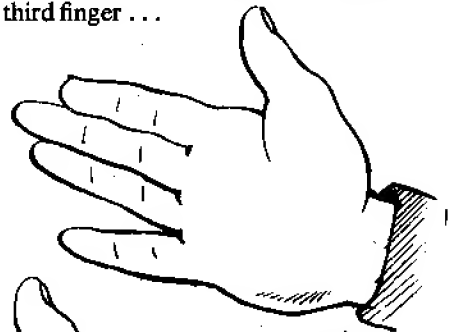
First lift your index finger ...



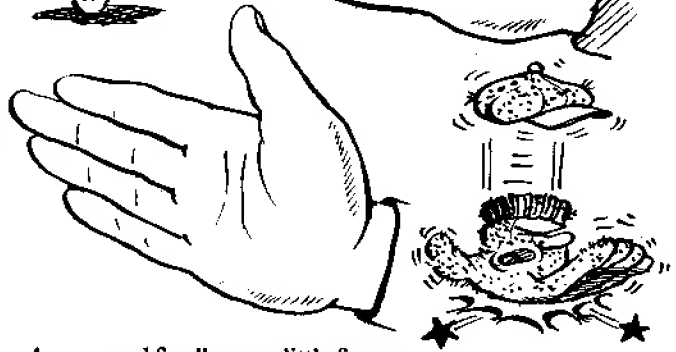
2 ... then your second finger ...



3 ... then your third finger ...



4 ... and finally your little finger.



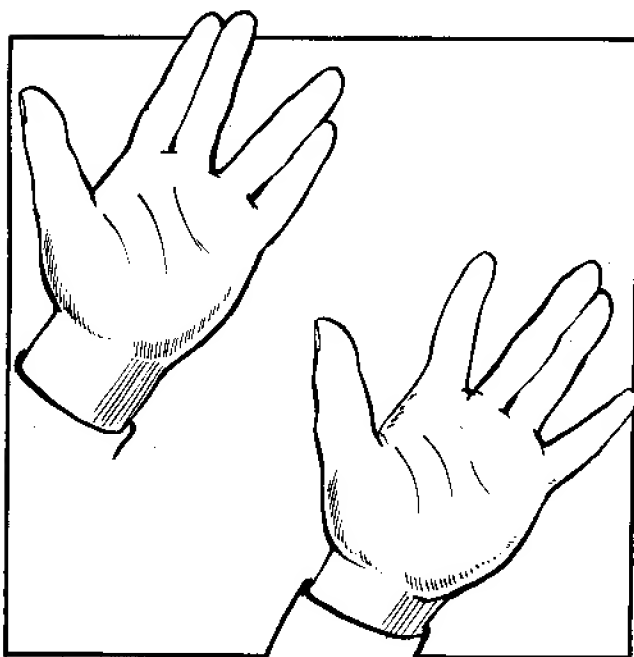
Now run through the sequence again, more quickly this time.

## And what about this?

Here is a similar stunt:

- 1 Separate your first and second fingers from your third and little fingers, like the first drawing.
- 2 Now bring your second and third fingers together, without moving your first and little fingers.

See if you can continue quickly moving your two middle fingers together and apart, together and apart, without moving your two outer fingers at all.

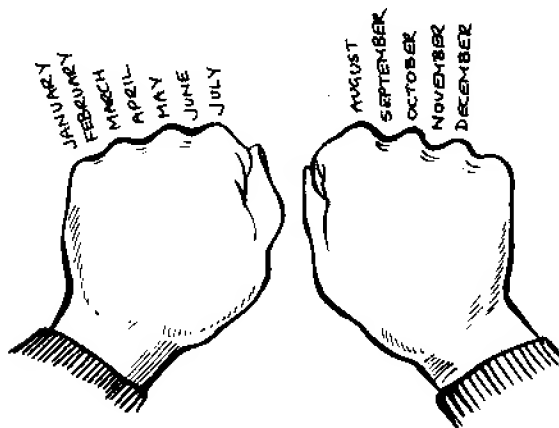


## Finger calendar

Perhaps you know the jingle which begins, 'Thirty days hath September, April, June and November. . . .' It is generally used as a way of remembering how many days there are in each month of the year.

Here is another way to remember the number of days in each month. Start at the leftmost knuckle of the left hand, point to each knuckle, and each hollow between the knuckles, in turn; and name them January, February, March and so on.

When you want to be reminded how many days a certain month has, count off the knuckles and hollows until you reach the month in question. If the month is represented by a knuckle (a high point) it will have thirty-one days (the higher number of days). If the month is represented by a hollow (a low point) it will have the lower number of days – that is, thirty days, except for February which has twenty-eight days in a normal year and twenty-nine in a leap year.

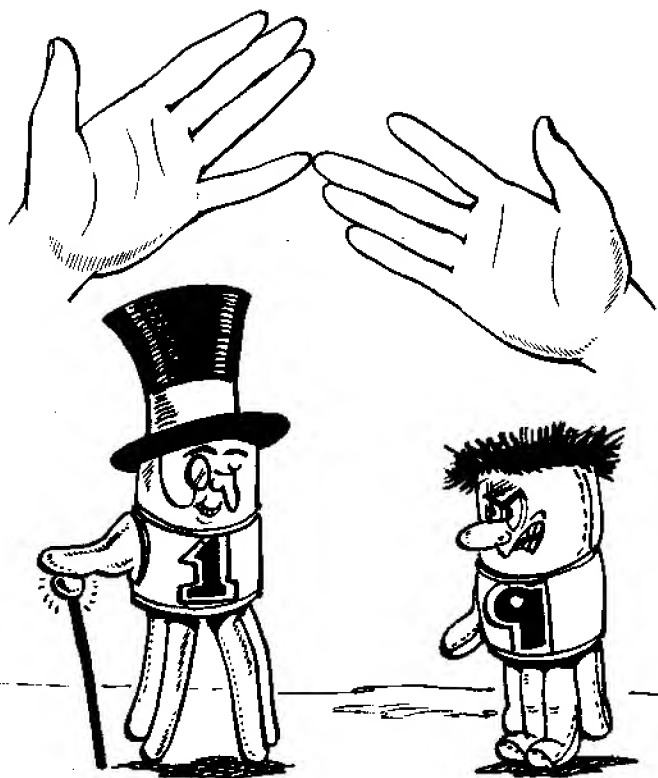
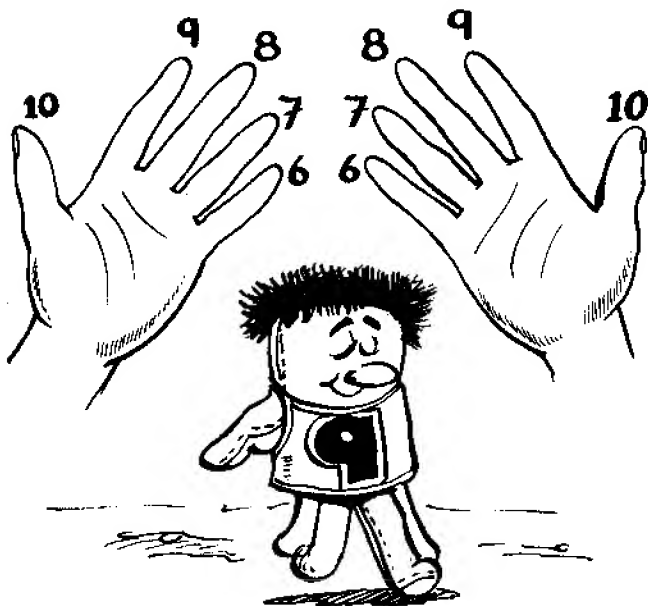


## Finger multiplication

Here is an unusual way of multiplying certain numbers. At first it may seem more difficult than the way you have learnt to multiply at school, but give it a try.

1 Number the fingers of each hand in sequence from the little finger, which we call 6, to the thumb, which we call 10.

2 To multiply any two numbers between 6 and 10, place together the tips of the two fingers which represent those numbers. For example, to multiply 6 and 8, put the little finger of one hand (6) against the middle finger of the other hand (8). Now we do two simple sums and add the answers together.



First count the two touching fingers and those below them, then multiply this number by 10. There are four such fingers here so the sum is  $4 \times 10$ . The answer is 40. Next count the number of fingers and thumbs above the two touching fingers; there are four fingers on one hand and two on the other. Multiply these two numbers together ( $2 \times 4$ ). The answer is 8. Add the two answers together ( $40 + 8$ ) and we have our final answer which is 48.

On the next page are two more examples.

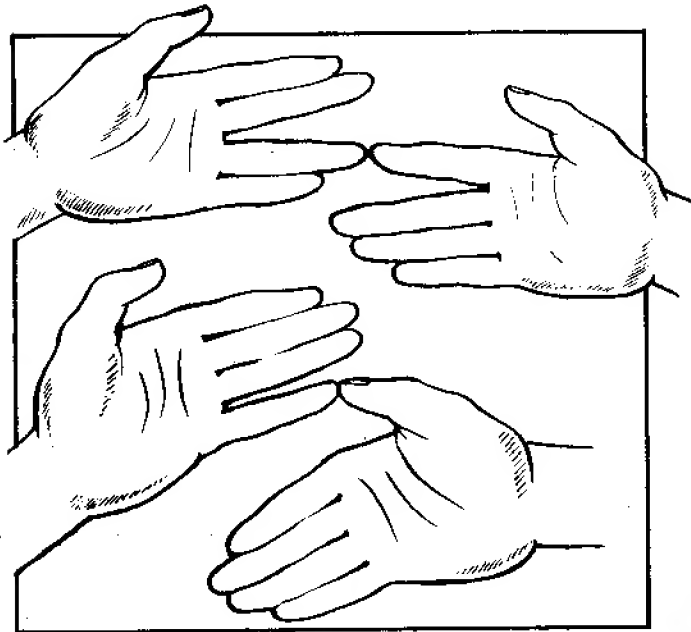
3 Problem: multiply  $7 \times 9$ .

Place the third finger of one hand (7) against the forefinger of the other (9).

At the bottom there is a total of six fingers  $6 \times 10 = 60$ .

At the top there are three fingers and one finger  $3 \times 1 = 3$ .

Add these numbers to find the final answer  $60 + 3 = 63$ .



4 Problem: multiply  $6 \times 10$ .

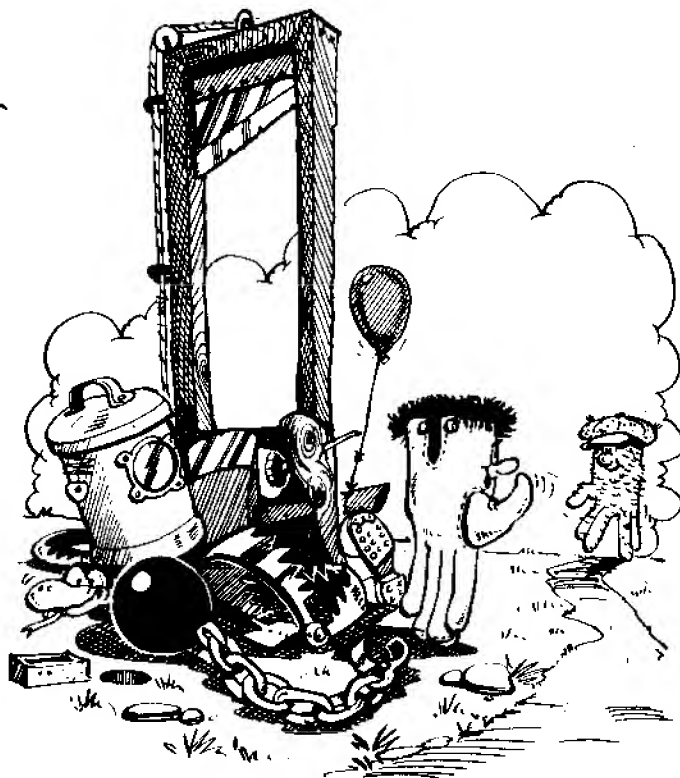
Place the fingers as shown in the lower picture.

At the bottom there are six fingers  $6 \times 10 = 60$ .

At the top there are four fingers on one side and none on the other  $4 \times 0 = 0$ .

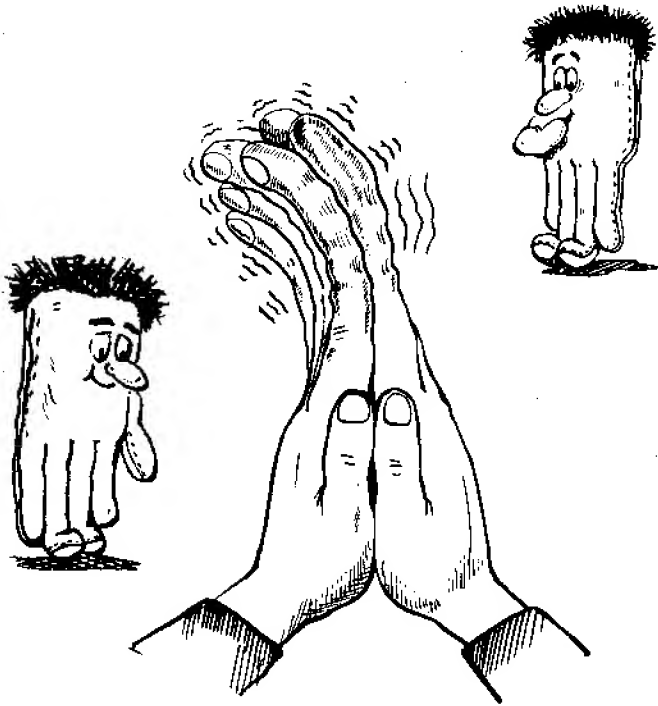
Therefore your answer is  $60 + 0 = 60$ .

## A handful of things to try on your friends

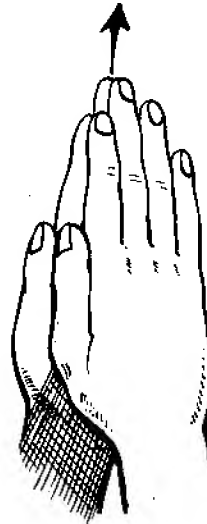


## Rubber fingers

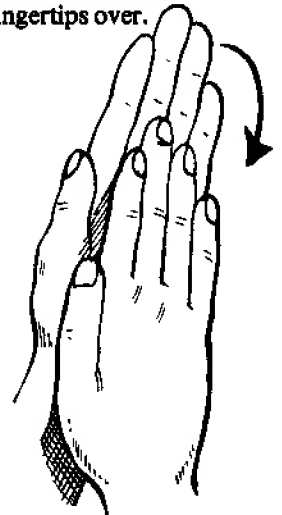
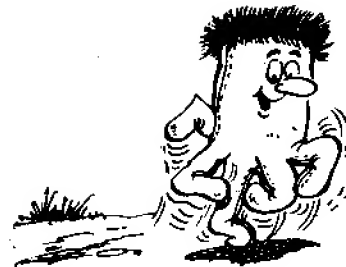
1 If you rub your hands together in a certain way, you will appear to have unusually long fingers which bend backwards as well as forwards. The following steps show you how to achieve this curious effect.



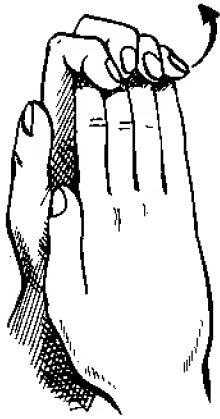
2 Place the palms of your hands together. Slide the left hand up ...



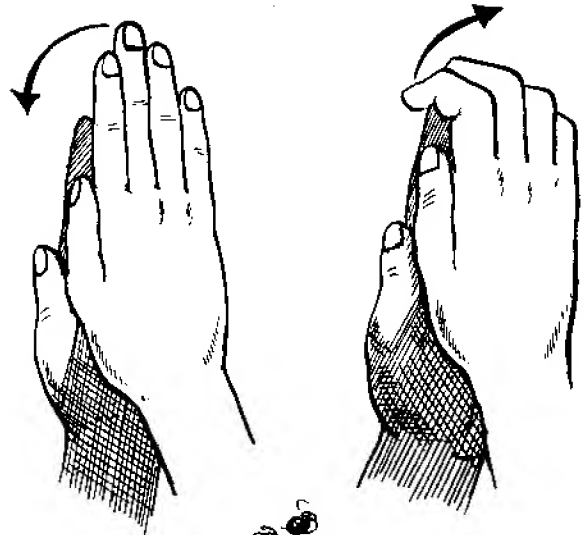
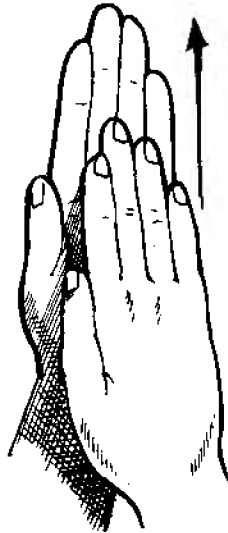
3 ... and curl your fingertips over.



4 Straighten your fingers.



5 Slide your right hand up ...



6 ... and curl your fingertips over.

7 Then straighten your fingers once more.

Continue sliding your hands up and down, bending and unbending the fingertips; do it slowly just at first, but you will have to do it quickly for the illusion of rubber fingers to be effective.



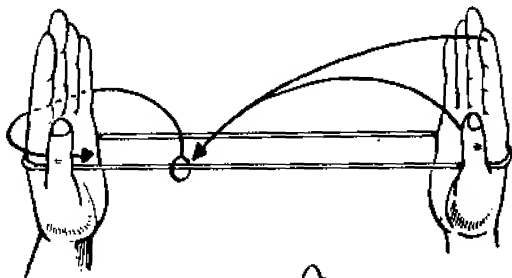
## Cat's cradle

This is a traditional game in which a loop of string is passed back and forth between two people's hands — done in such a way that the strings cross and make a series of changing patterns.

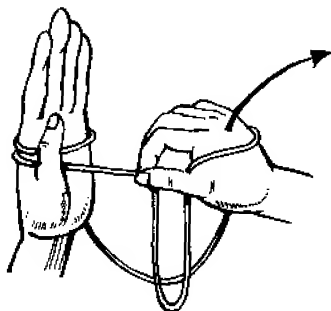
Cat's Cradle is the name given to the first pattern in the series — each pattern has its own name — but nobody knows for sure quite what the name means.

You will need a piece of smooth string about two metres long. Form this into a loop by knotting the ends together neatly.

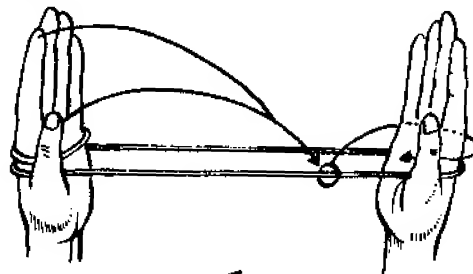
1 *First person.* Place the loop around your hands as shown. Take hold of the near string with the finger and thumb of your right hand; take it across your left palm and loop it around the back of your hand . . .



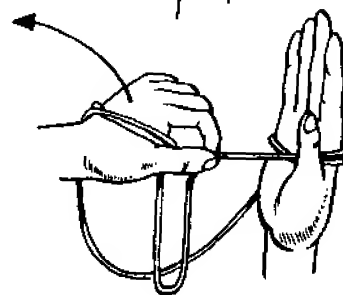
2 . . . like this.  
Return your right hand to its previous position.



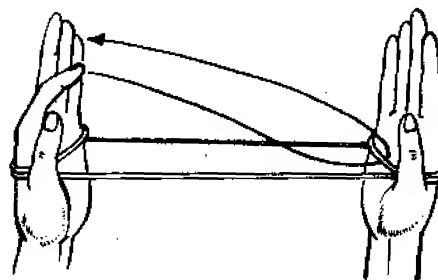
3 Now take hold of the near string with your left hand and loop it around your right hand . . .



4 . . . like this.  
Return your left hand to its previous position.

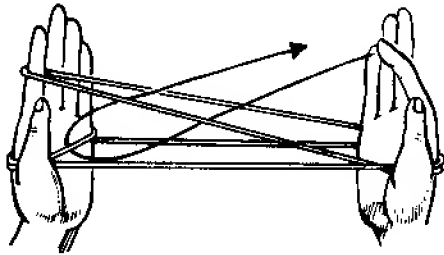


5 Move your left hand to the right; slip the forefinger under the right palm string and return, pulling the string with it.

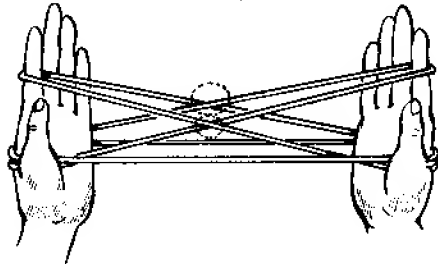




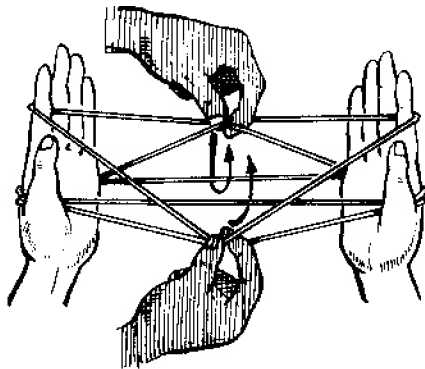
6 Similarly with the right hand, slip the forefinger under the left palm string and pull it across to the right.



7 This pattern is the 'cat's cradle'.



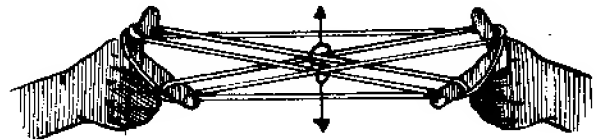
*Second person.* Notice the two places, marked with circles, where the strings cross. Take hold of these crossed strings between finger and thumb and pull apart like this.



8 Take the crossed strings under the parallel strings and up into the middle. Extend your forefingers and thumbs, taking up the tension and eventually carrying the string on your own.

*First person.* Release your hands gently, allowing your partner to take over the string.

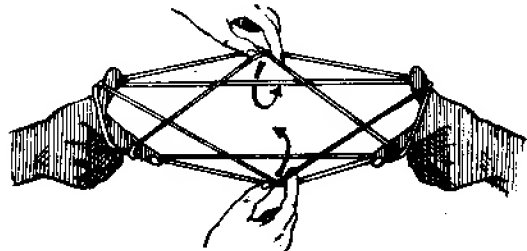
9 This pattern is called a 'bed'.



*First person.* Take hold of the crossed strings and pull apart...

10 ... and, as in step 8, take them under the parallel strings and up into the middle. Extend your forefingers and thumbs to support the string.

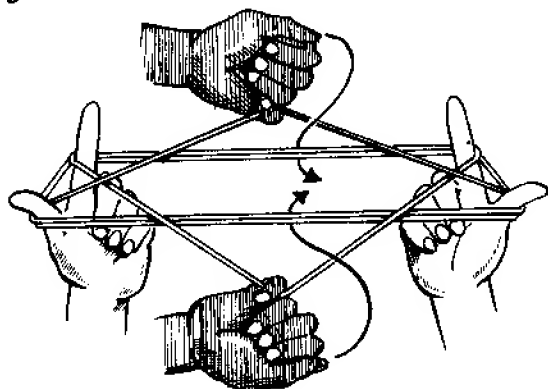
*Second person.* Release your hands gently.



11 This pattern is called 'two candles'.

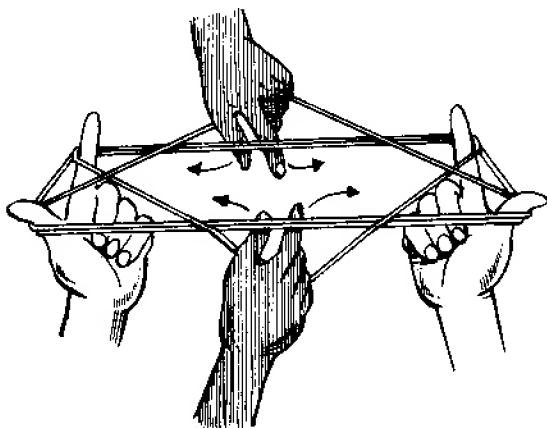


12 *Second person.* Hook the little fingers of each hand under the inside string of the opposite side, pulling the strings over.



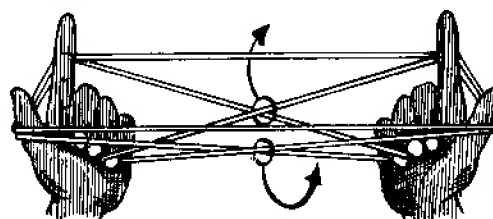
13 Keep hold of them while you push your forefingers and thumbs under the parallel strings and up into the centre. Extend your fingers and thumbs to support the string.

*First person.* Remove your hands gently.



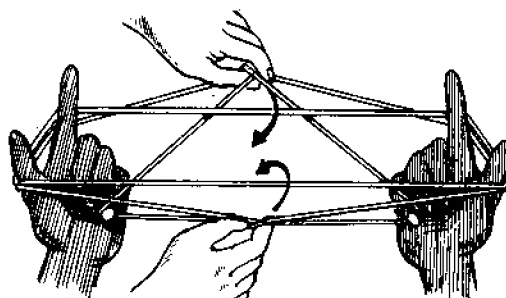
14 This pattern is called a 'manger'.

*First person.* Take hold of the crossed strings and pull them outwards . . .

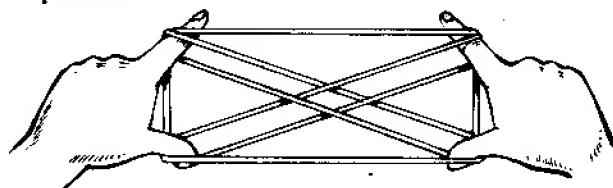


15 . . . up and over the parallel strings and down into the centre. Extend your fingers and thumbs to support the string.

*Second person.* Release your hands.

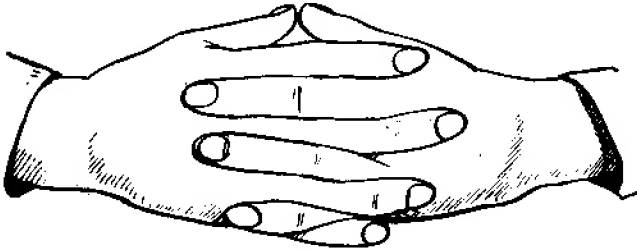


16 This pattern is called 'St Andrew's Cross'. See how many moves you can invent for yourself in order to create new patterns.

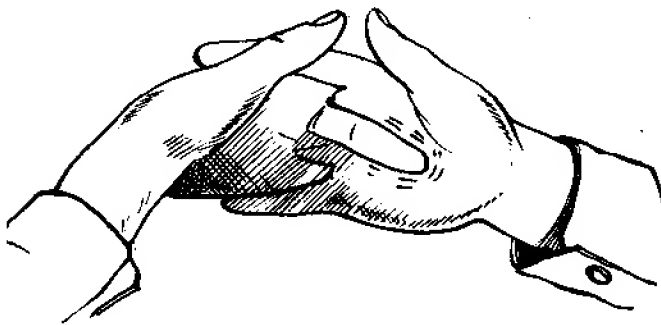


## Nine fingers

1 Clasp your hands together in an apparently normal way, but keep one finger hidden. Point out that you have only nine fingers showing and ask your friends to guess which one is missing.



2 Give the answer by revealing the inside of your clasped hands and wiggling the missing finger.



You can try this trick several times, hiding any one of your fingers similarly in the palm of your hand.

## Finger whistle 1

Can you whistle with your fingers? Try this method:

Bring the tips of the forefinger and little finger of one hand together. Curl your tongue back, push your two fingertips against the underside of your tongue and blow.



## Finger whistle 2

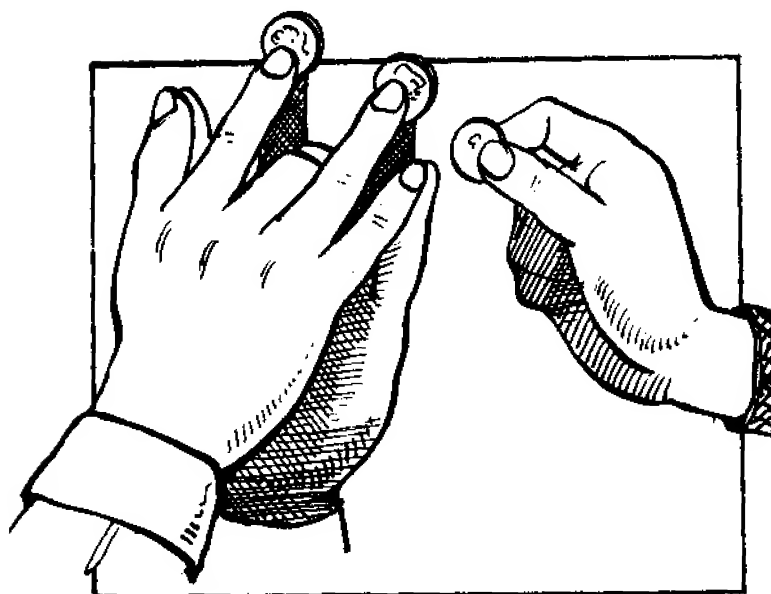
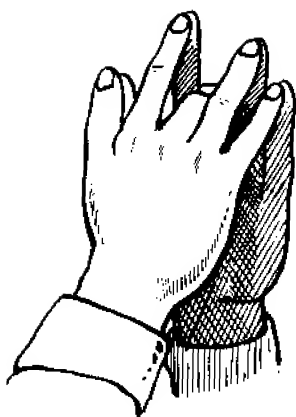
Or try this method:

Bend the two top joints of the forefinger of one hand so that the space between the joints forms a small hole. Place this bent finger against the underside of your tongue and blow.

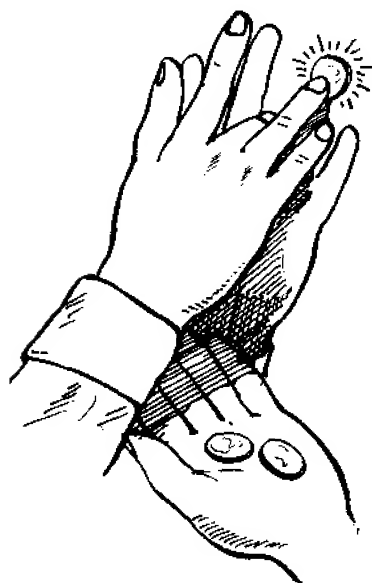


## Scotsman's fingers

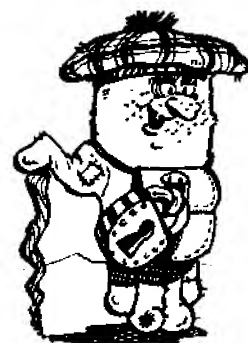
1 Get a friend to place his hands together as shown here – the knuckles of the middle fingers placed firmly together and the tips of the thumbs and the other pairs of fingers touching each other.



2 Put a penny between the tips of his forefingers and say, 'Here's a penny for the Englishman.' Next put a penny between the tips of the third fingers and say, 'Here's a penny for the Scotsman.' Lastly put a penny between the little fingers and say, 'Here's a penny for the Irishman.'



3 Insist that your friend keeps the knuckles of his middle fingers together and ask him to drop the pennies by pulling his fingertips apart. The 'Englishman' and the 'Irishman' will drop their pennies but the 'Scotsman' will keep a tight hold on his!

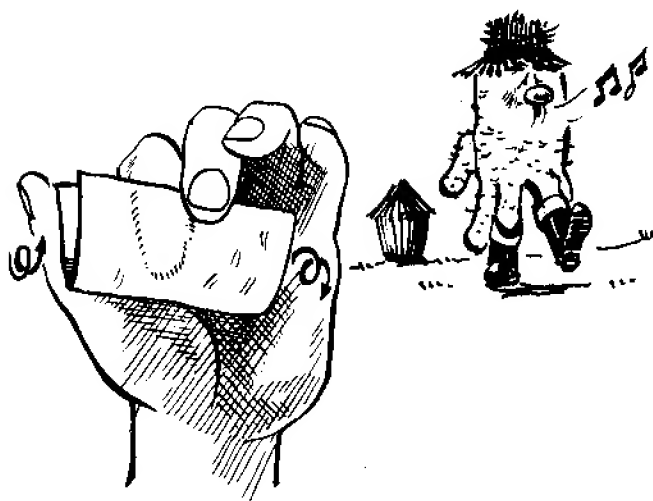
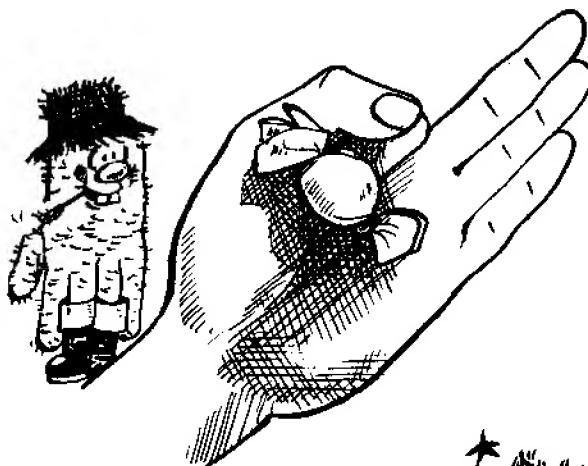


## Sweet surprise

For this trick you will need a sweet wrapper or a similar small piece of coloured paper.

1 Bend the forefinger of one hand forward.

2 Fold the sweet wrapper in half and place your forefinger between the two layers. Twist the two ends of the paper.



3 Try to cover the unwrapped part of your forefinger with your thumb, so that you appear to be holding a sweet in the palm of your hand. Offer it to friends – they will get a surprise when they try to pick it up!



## The mummy's finger

This trick is similar to the Sweet Surprise. You will need the inside part of a matchbox, some cotton wool (or something similar) and a pair of scissors.

1 The trick: you show a friend a little box filled with cotton wool, then carefully remove this padding to reveal a human finger. You persuade your friend that this is the finger of an Egyptian mummy, thousands of years old.

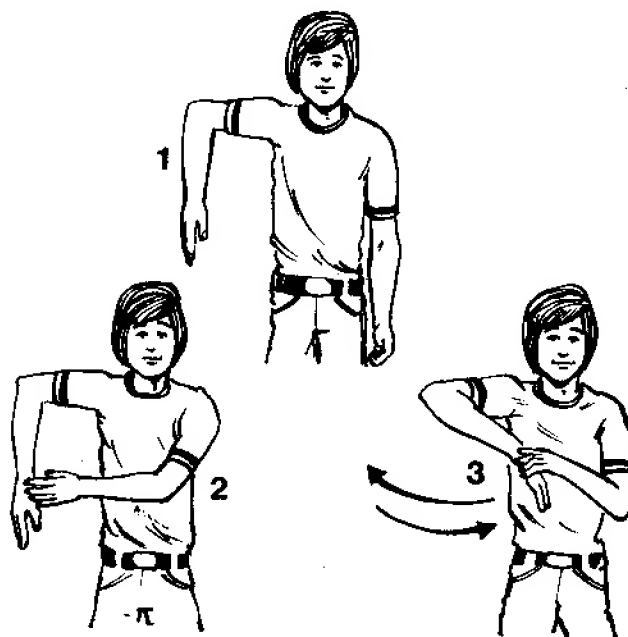
2 The facts: actually it is your own finger which you slip into the box through a hole cut into its bottom.



## Arm swing

In this routine your arm swings around in a circle as though it had no bones in it. Steps 6–9 should be performed in one continuous movement so that the turning of the hand passes unnoticed by your audience.

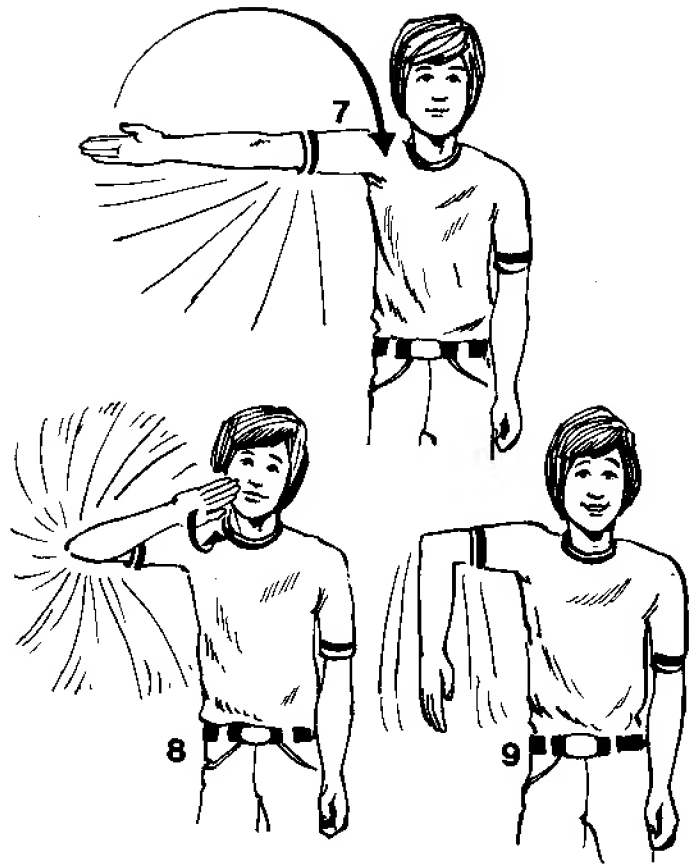
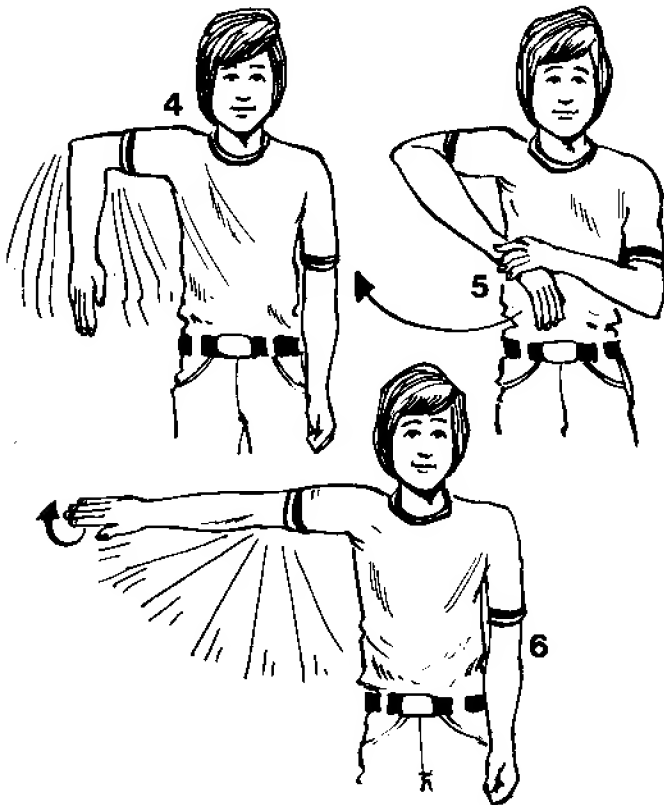
- 1 Raise one elbow to shoulder height and let the forearm hang loose.
- 2 Take hold of the hanging arm with your other hand . . .
- 3 . . . and lift it across your body. Let it go . . .



4 ... and allow your arm to swing from your elbow, left and right, and then come gradually to a halt.

5 Take hold of the hanging arm once more. Lift it and, this time, push it away.

6 Let the arm swing right out. As the arm straightens, turn the hand palm forward.



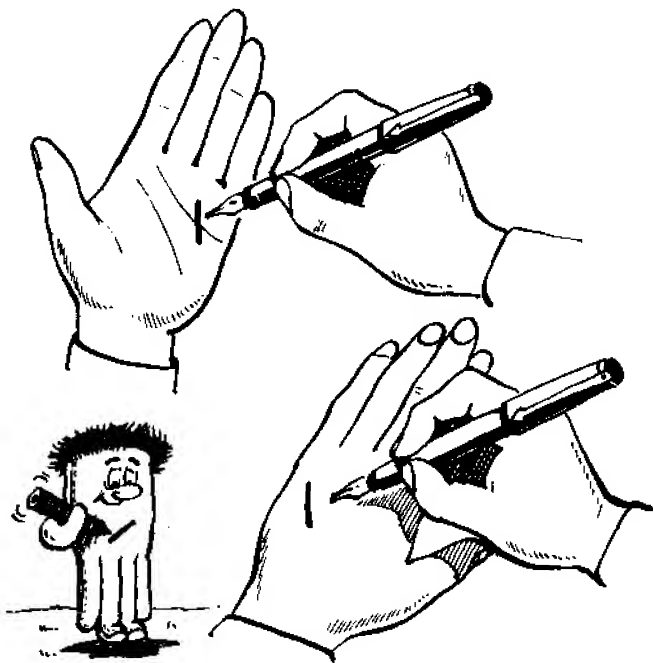
7 Continue the circular movement ...

8 ... and turn the hand around as it reaches your shoulder.

9 After completing the circle, let your forearm hang loose again and swing to a halt.

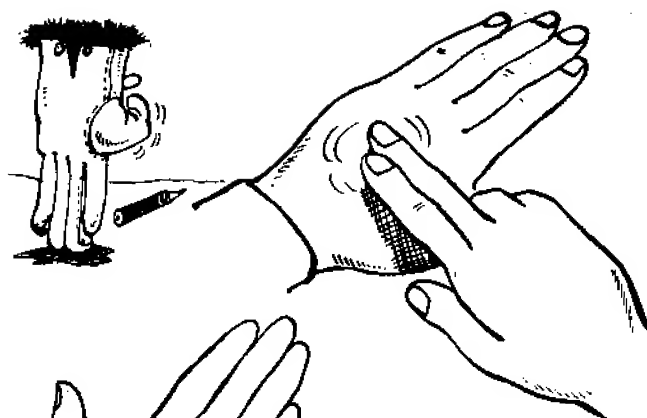
## Magic cross

1 With pen and ink (not a ball-point pen) or with a fine brush and well-mixed water colour paint, draw a line across the crease of your left palm.

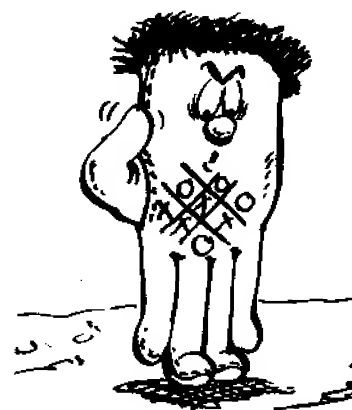


2 Turn your hand over and draw a similar line on the other side.

3 Now say, 'I'm going to rub this line right through to the other side of my hand.' Moisten a finger and rub the back of your hand vigorously until the line disappears.



4 Turn your hand over and there is a cross where only a line was before. The line you drew on the back of your hand really seems to have passed through to this side.



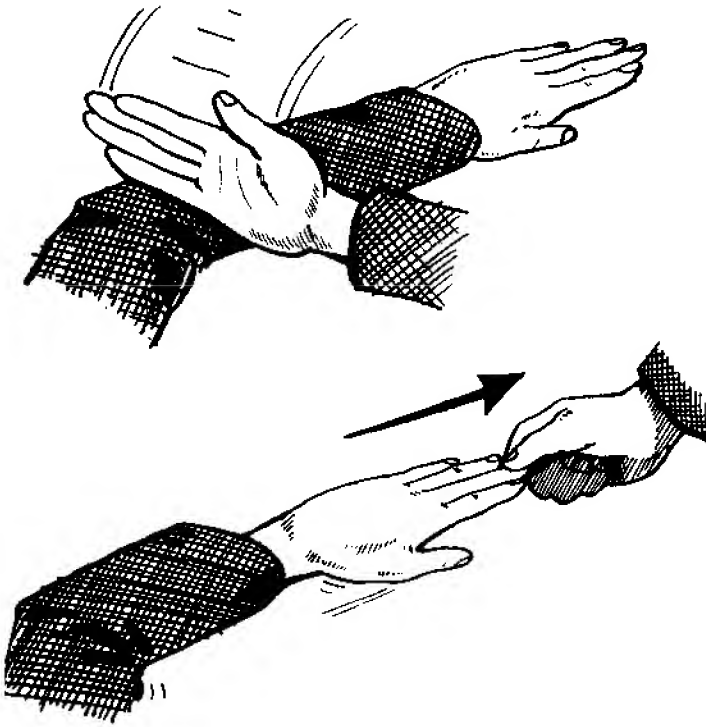
The secret: the cross is formed in step 2 when you turn your hand over for the first time. Under cover of the turn, you quickly close and open your hand and the wet ink line will become imprinted across itself.



## Amputated arm

To perform this simple stunt you will need to wear a coat of some kind. Pull the cuff of your left sleeve down as far as you can and then rest your arm on a table or desk top.

- 1 Chop sharply at your left elbow with your right hand.
- 2 Now take hold of your left hand and pull it slowly out of the sleeve as far as possible. For a moment it will look as if you really have chopped off your arm!



## Cracking your nose

- 1 Push the tip of your nose to one side with the forefinger of one hand. Suddenly there will be a cracking sound as if your nose were breaking.



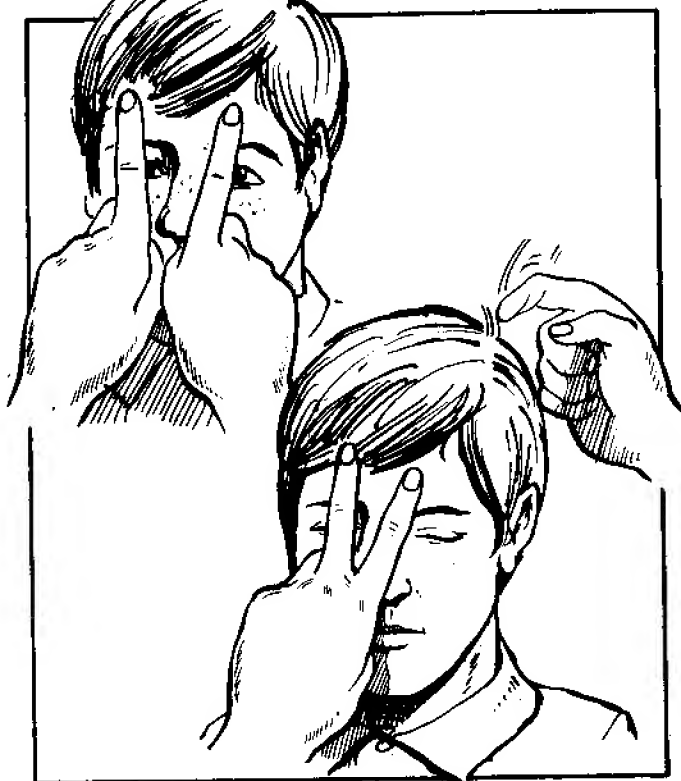
- 2 You do this by secretly putting your thumbnail behind your two front teeth; bringing your thumb forward sharply makes the cracking noise.



## The spirit finger

When you are alone with a friend, ask him if he believes in ghosts, then tell him you can summon a ghost with his help.

1 Place your two forefingers on his forehead and lightly run them down his face two or three times. (This is really just to get him used to seeing your two hands in front of his face.)



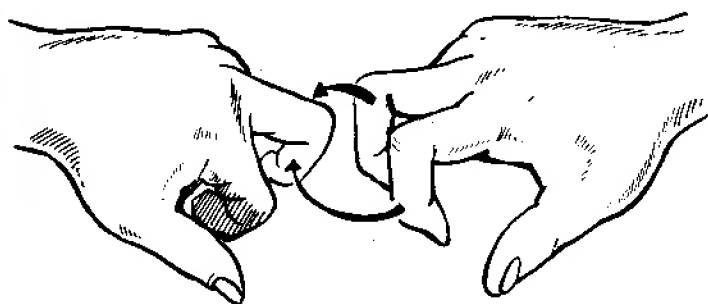
2 Ask him to close his eyes. When he does, quickly substitute two fingers of one hand for the two fingers you have been using. This frees one of your hands. As you run the fingers of one hand over your friend's eyes, lightly tap him on the back of the head with the other hand. Immediately return your hands to the earlier position with both forefingers touching his face. When your friend opens his eyes and sees your two fingers apparently still occupied, he should be unable to explain who – or what – tapped him.

## Knuckle snap

Here is an unusual way of making a snapping or popping noise with your fingers.

Grip the middle finger of one hand firmly between the forefinger and middle finger of the other hand as shown. Pull your hands apart to make the popping noise.

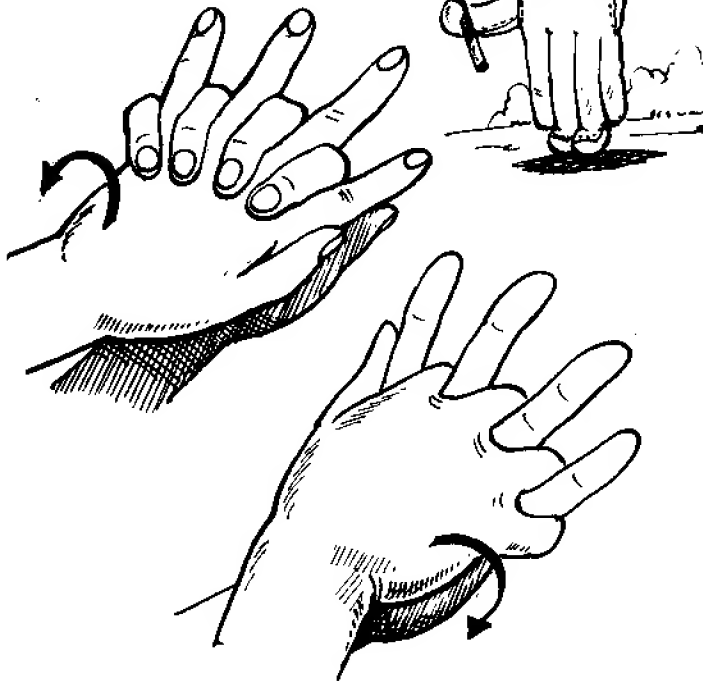
Two people can grip each other's fingers in this way to snap them. It can also be used as a private handshake between members of a secret society or club.



## Disappearing fingernails

1 Clasp your hands together as shown and rest the back of your right hand on the table. Draw attention to the fact that your fingernails are showing.

2 Turn your hands over quickly and point out that there are no fingernails on this side. Repeat this action two or three times.



Now say the magic word, turn your hands over again and this time there are no fingernails on the other side either! Turn your hands back and forth to show that your fingernails have completely disappeared.

3 This is the secret: while turning your wrists you quickly close the extended fingers and raise the closed ones. The turning-over movement hides the opening and closing of your fingers.

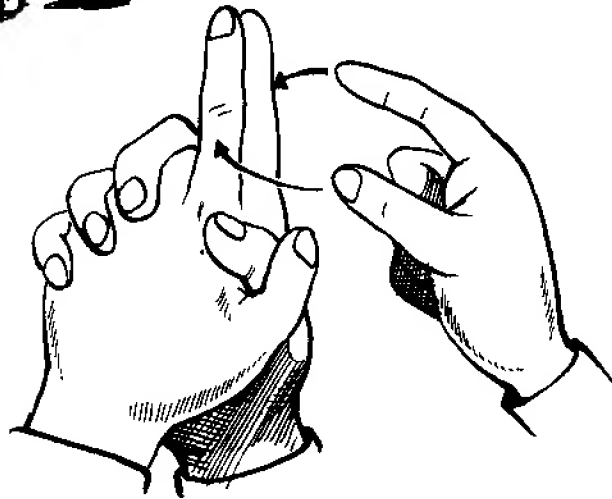
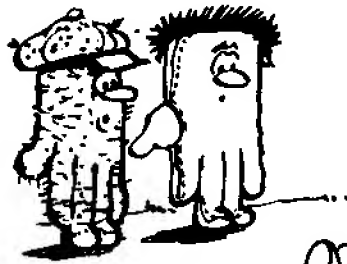


## Dead finger

Ask a friend to clasp your left hand with his right hand; then each raise your forefinger so that they both rest against each other.

Take hold of these two fingers with the thumb and forefinger of your right hand and run them gently up and down. You will have the curious feeling that one side of your finger has become numb.

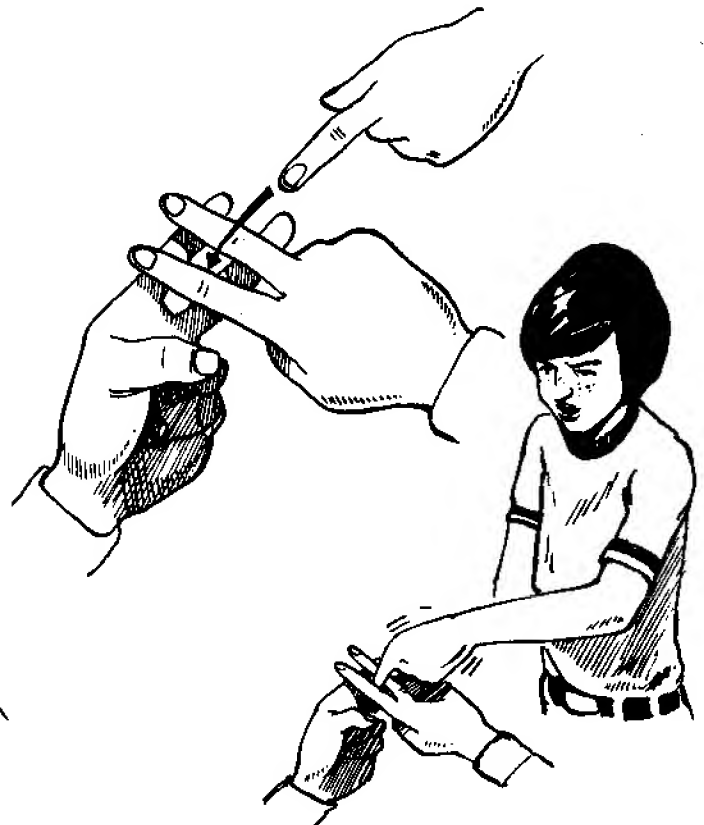
Let your partner do the same; he will feel that *his* finger is partly numb, too.



## Finger trap

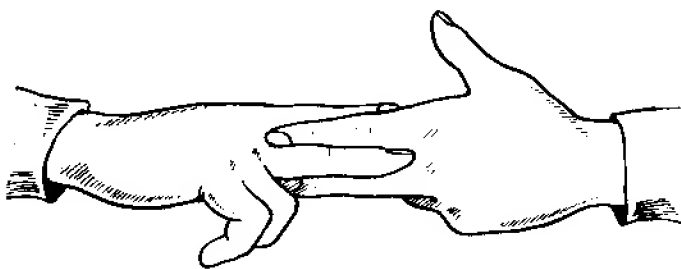
1 Cross two fingers of each hand as shown in the illustration. Ask somebody to put his finger into the hole.

2 When he has done so, draw your own fingers close together to trap your victim's finger. He should find it difficult to escape.



### Another finger trap

1 Ask somebody to place his or her forefingers and middle fingers together like this.



2 Now grasp hold of the fingers with your own hand. Hold tight and he or she should find it impossible to pull the fingers apart.



### Feat of strength

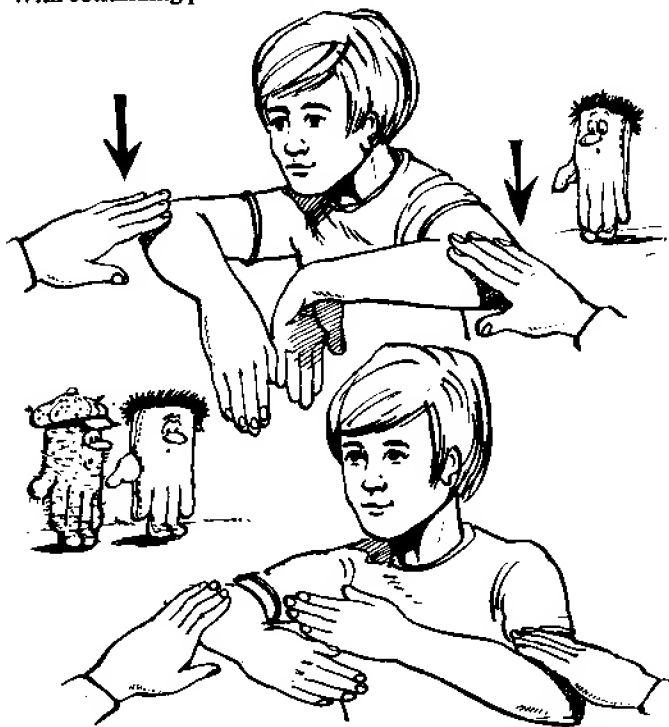
Place one hand on top of your head and press down firmly, then challenge someone to lift your hand from your head. They should find it impossible.



## Cocking a slow snook

1 Raise your elbows high and let your hands hang together one in front of the other. The thumb of your right hand should rest against the little finger of your left hand. Ask somebody to assist you in performing this stunt by standing in front of you and pressing gently down on your elbows.

2 As he does so, slowly lower your elbows and let your hands ever so gradually swivel into a horizontal position. With continuing pressure . . .

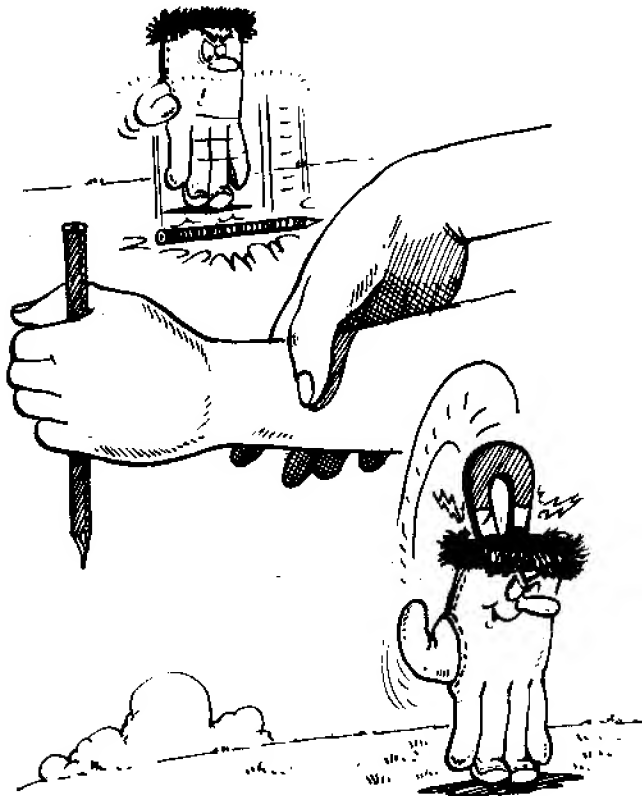


3 . . . continue to lower your elbows and swivel your hands gradually so that the fingers point upwards.

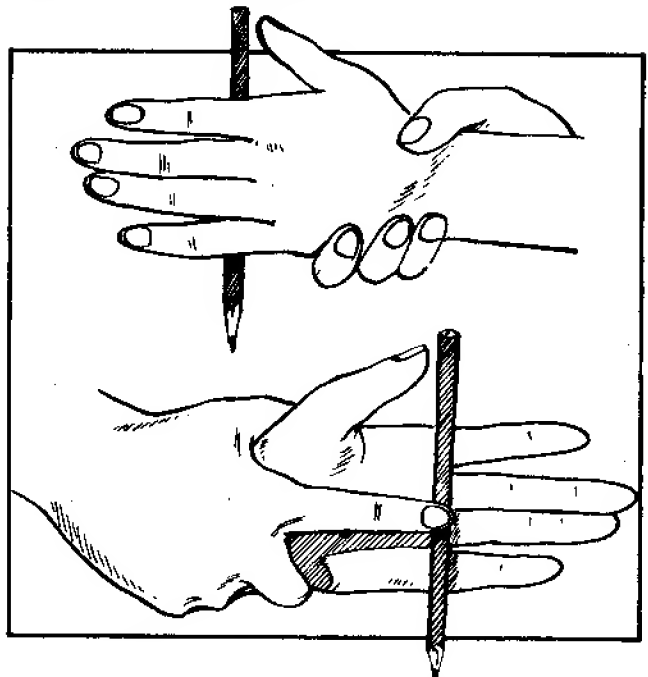
4 Now your hands are placed so that you can bring your left thumb back to your nose and wiggle your fingers at your assistant until he realises that he has been 'had'.

## Magnetic hand

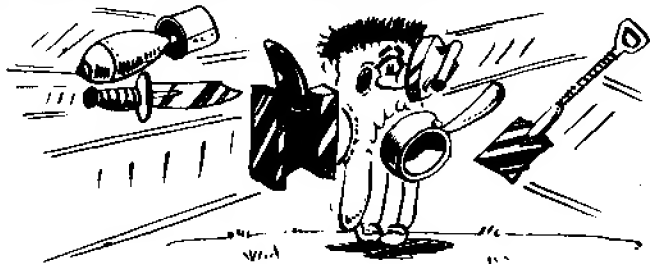
1 Hold a pencil in your left hand, the back of which should be towards your audience. Rub the inside of your left wrist with the other hand, explaining that this is to create 'magnetic force'.



2 Suddenly open your fingers – and the pencil appears to be suspended without support.



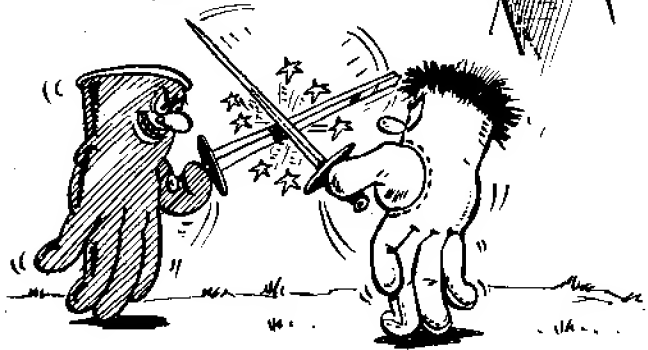
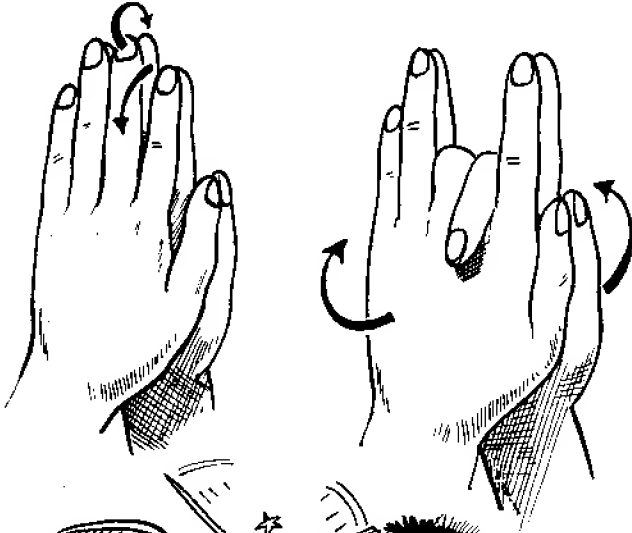
3 Actually you hold the pencil with the tip of your right forefinger, which your audience cannot see.



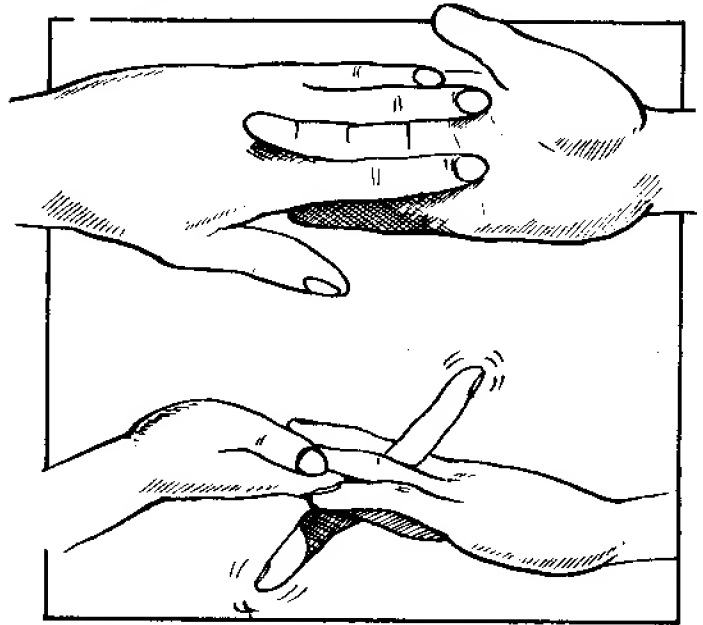
## Finger through hand

1 Place your hands together. Bring the right middle finger down between the first two fingers of the left hand. Then bend the left middle finger down ...

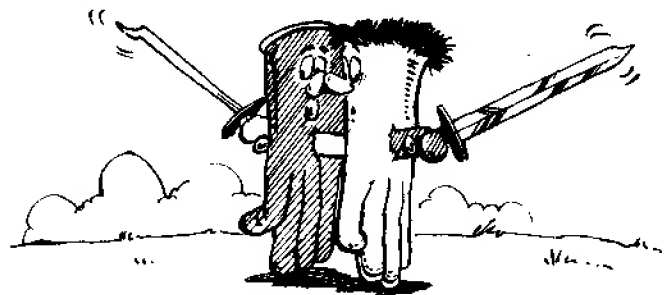
2 ... like this. Rotate your hands in opposite directions so that your palms face upwards and downwards ...



3 ... like this. Hold your hands high and wiggle your two middle fingers.



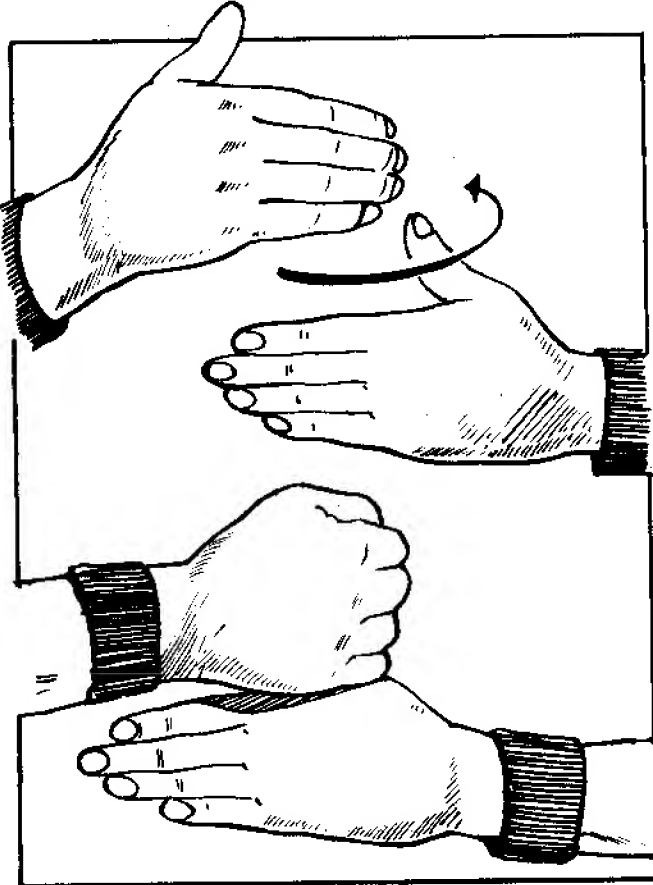
4 You appear to have one long finger passing right through your hand.



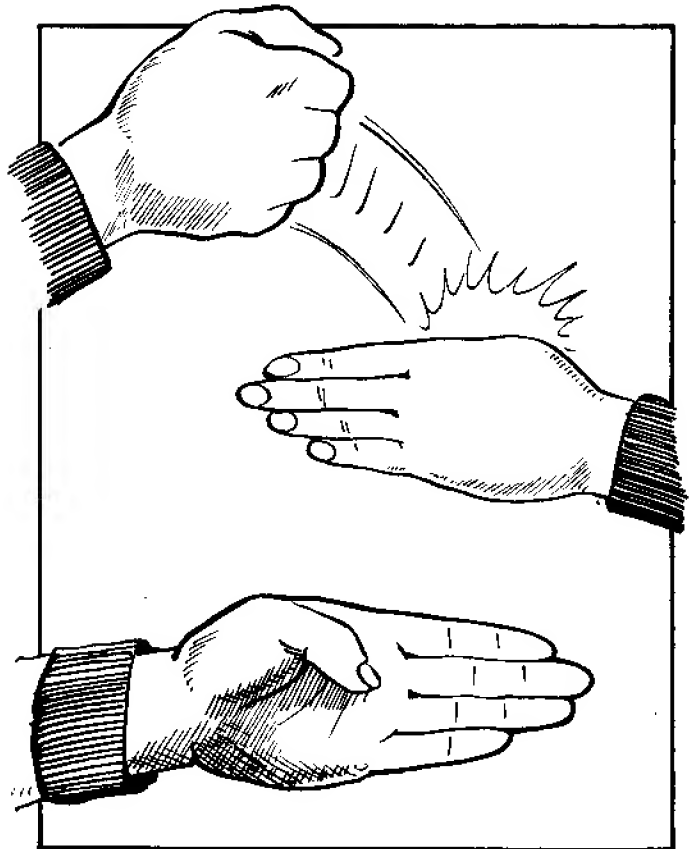


## Thumb snatch

- 1 Hold your left hand in front of you with the palm towards you and the thumb standing up.
- 2 Make as if to grasp your left thumb.



- 3 Pull your hand away and the thumb goes too.

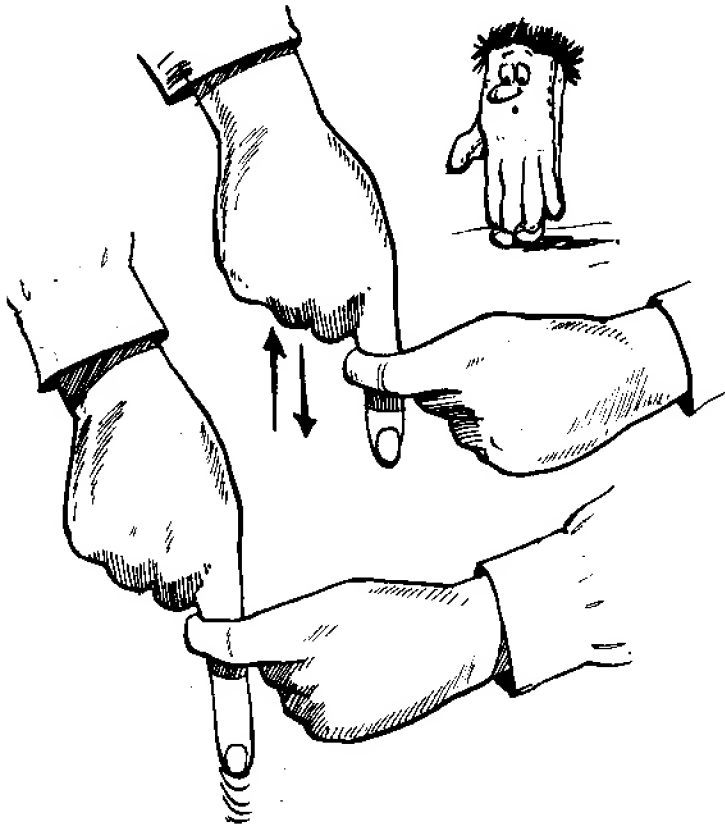


- 4 This is the secret: your thumb is really bent into the palm of your hand. In step 1, bring your right hand between your left thumb and your audience so that you can bend the thumb without it being seen.

## Finger stretching

1 Place one hand in front of you with the forefinger pointing down. Curl the forefinger of your other hand around the pointing finger, then move the pointing finger up and down rapidly and repeatedly.

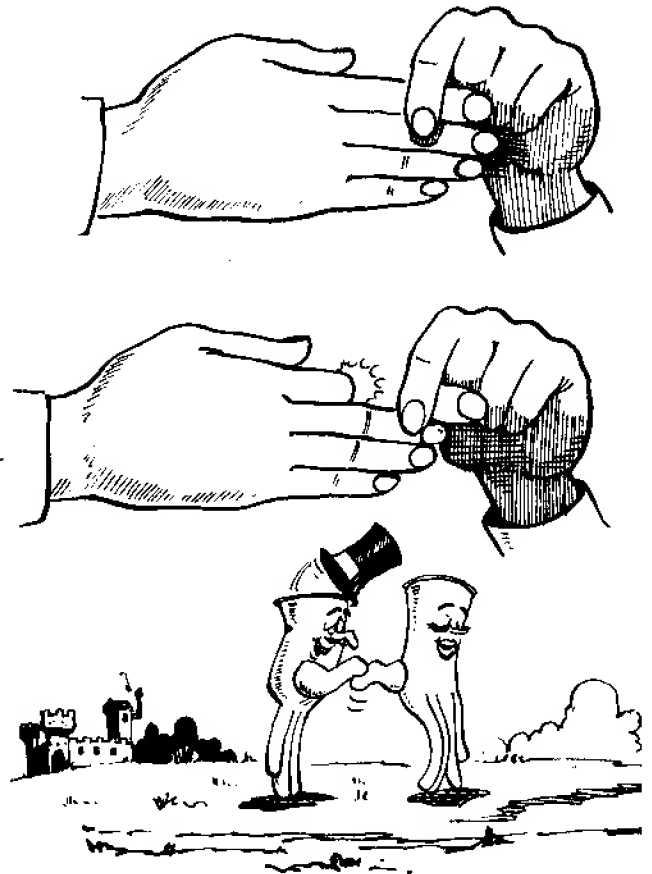
2 The finger will appear to be much longer than it really is.



## Finger break

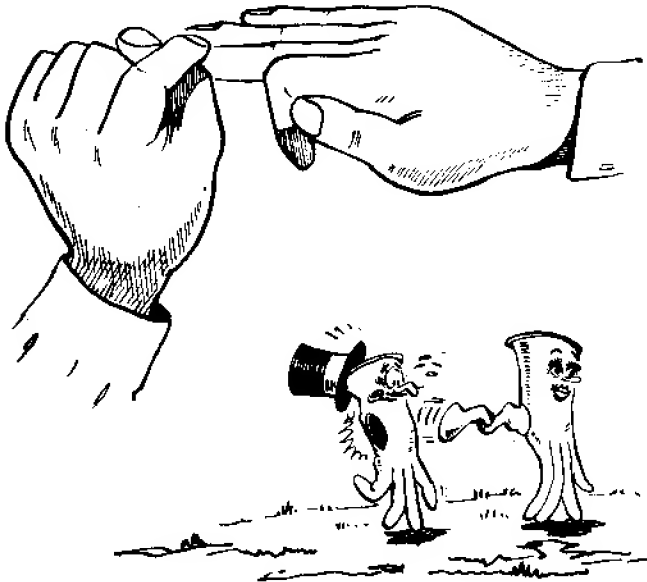
1 The trick: take hold of your right forefinger with your left hand and . . .

2 . . . break off the end!



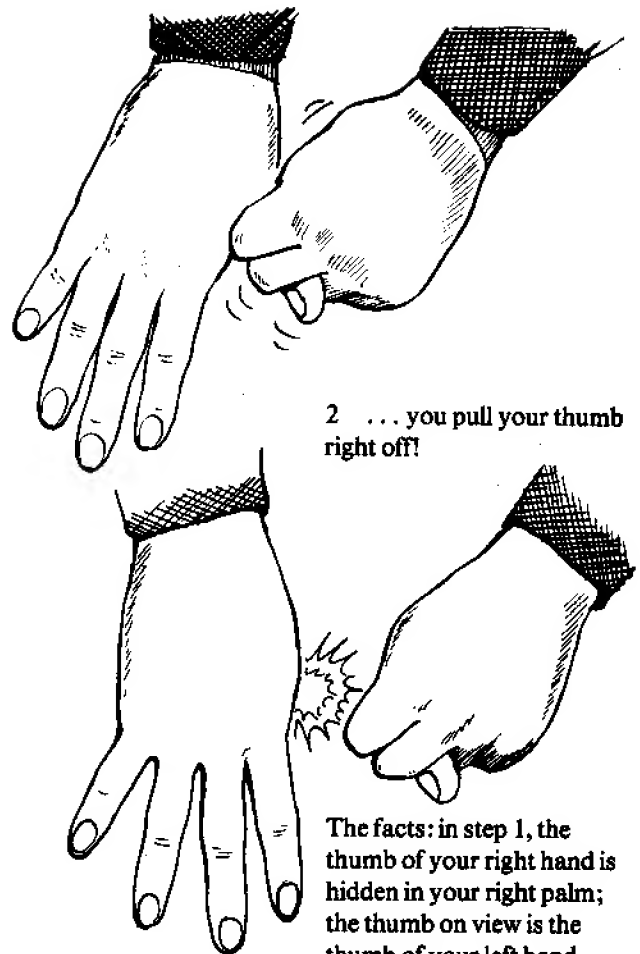
3 The facts: in step 1, your right forefinger is hidden and your left thumb, tucked behind one finger, is what your audience sees as your right forefinger.

Rest your left forefinger against the fingers of your right hand and, in step 2, slide your left hand just 2 or 3cm to the left. Slide it back again to 'mend' your finger.



### Thumb break

1 The trick: your left hand grasps the thumb of your right hand. You bend it back and forth and with a great deal of effort . . .



2 . . . you pull your thumb right off!

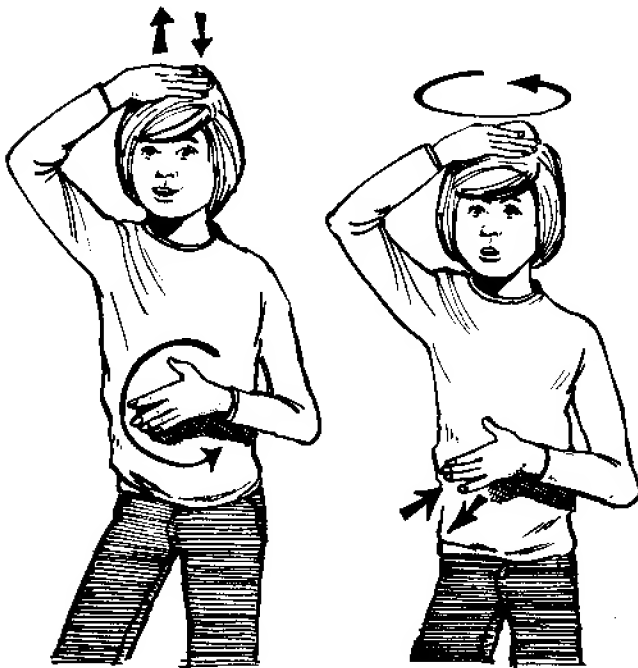
The facts: in step 1, the thumb of your right hand is hidden in your right palm; the thumb on view is the thumb of your left hand.

In step 2, do not bring your hands much more than 1 or 2cm apart. Then return your thumb to 'mend' your hand.

## Pat and rub

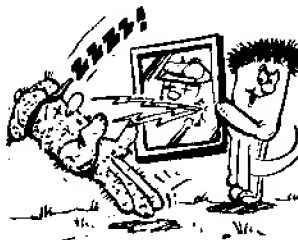
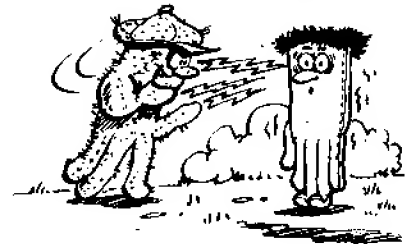
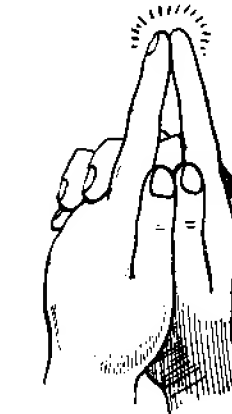
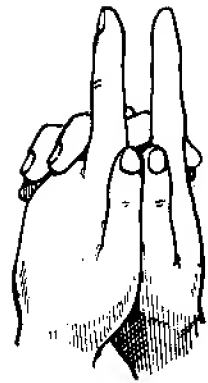
- 1 Pat the top of your head with your right hand while rubbing your stomach in circles with your left hand.
- 2 Now rub your head with your right hand and pat your stomach with the left.

Get some of your friends to do this with you and take it in turns to call out 'Change!' At this command everybody should immediately stop patting and start rubbing or vice versa. In fact, of course, it is very easy to become confused.



## Mind over matter

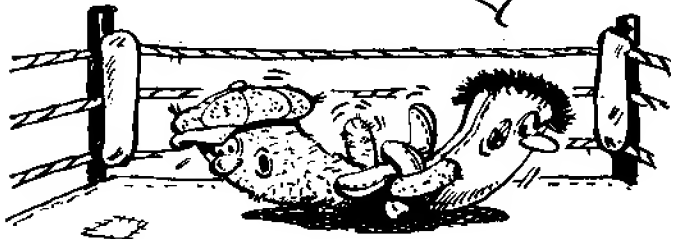
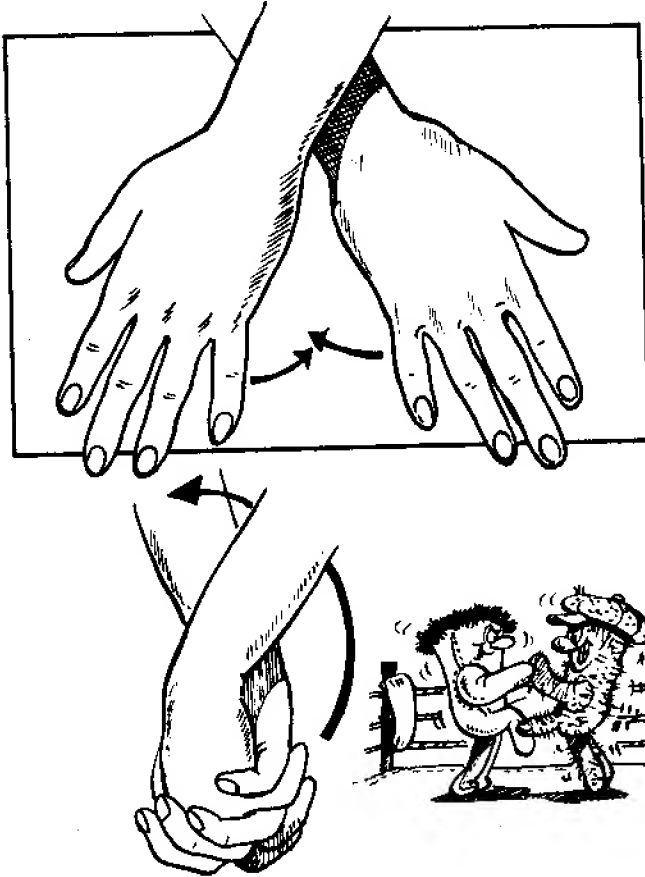
- 1 Tell a friend that you have supernatural powers – that you can get him to act in a certain way simply by willing him to act in that way. To demonstrate, ask him to clasp his hands together with the forefingers sticking out as shown.



- 2 Tell him to relax, and tell him you will concentrate your mind on making his fingertips come together. If he remains relaxed his fingertips really will come together – not because of your supernatural powers but because it is quite natural for them to do so.

## Wiggle that finger

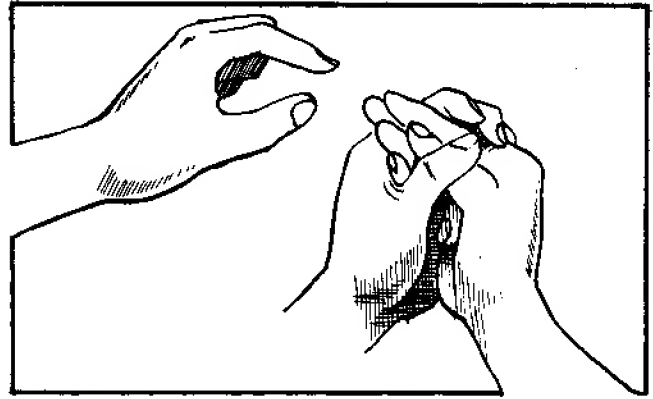
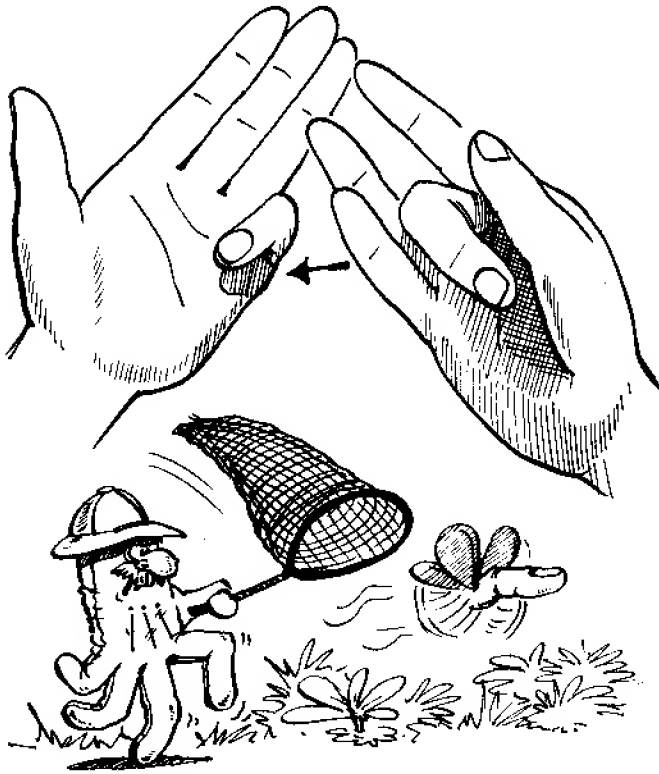
- 1 Get a friend to cross his wrists and then to clasp his hands together.
- 2 Get him to bring his hands up between his arms.



- 3 Point to one of his fingers (but make sure you do not touch it) and tell him to wiggle that finger. He will probably wiggle one of the fingers on his other hand.

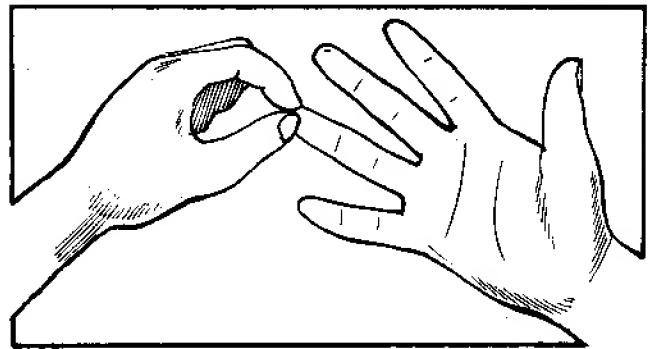
## The elusive finger

1 Bend down the middle finger of your right hand. Take the remaining fingers across into the palm of your left hand, pushing the little finger of your left hand across to the left with them. Wrap the left hand around the five fingertips. (With practice you will be able to do this more quickly and more naturally than at your first attempt.)



2 Ask a friend to take hold of what he believes to be your middle finger.

3 When he has done so, quickly remove your left hand and spread the fingers of your right hand to reveal which finger he has chosen. Of course, it will be the wrong one, because the middle finger simply was not there to choose.



## Scissors, paper, stone

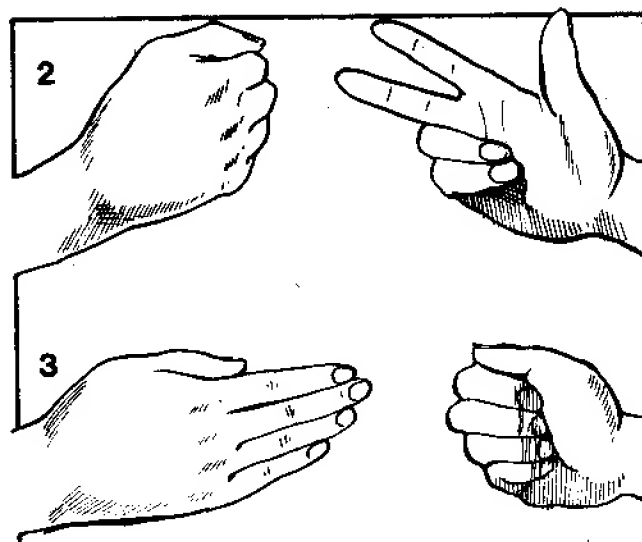
In the Far East, instead of tossing a coin to decide who is to have first go in any game or contest, they play the 'scissors paper, stone' game.

The two contestants each show a hand in one of three ways to represent scissors, paper or stone. Here are the hand positions and the customary way of describing the winning and losing hands.

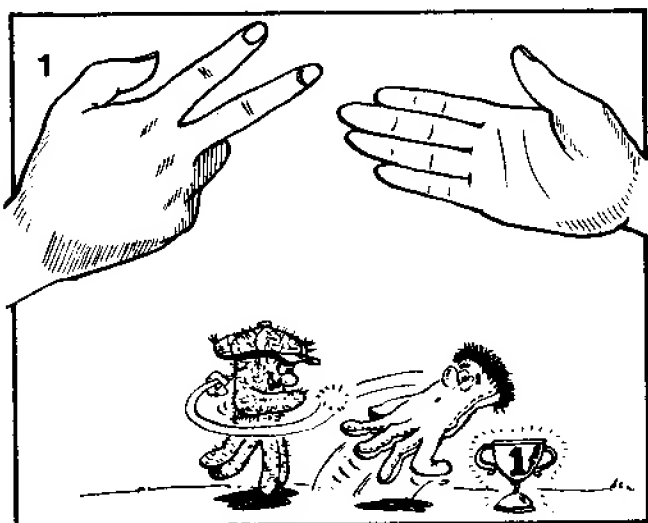
1 Two outstretched fingers represent scissors; an open hand represents paper. Scissors cut paper (i.e. scissors win).

2 A hand formed into a fist represents stone. Stone blunts scissors (i.e. stone wins).

3 Paper wraps stone (i.e. paper wins).



That is to say, each of the hand positions can beat, and can be beaten by, one of the others. Whatever hand position you choose the chances of winning, losing or drawing are numerically equal. But you must try to read your opponent's mind and anticipate his moves. The winner is likely to be the person who has the better understanding of his opponent's character.

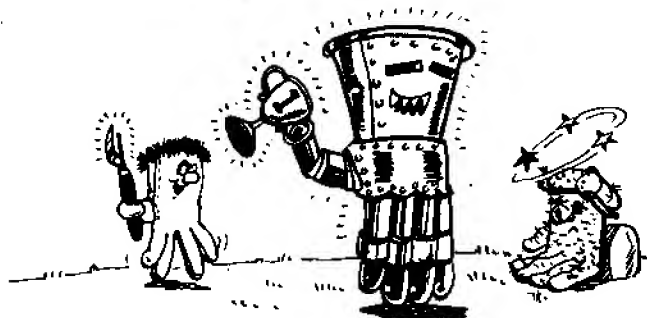
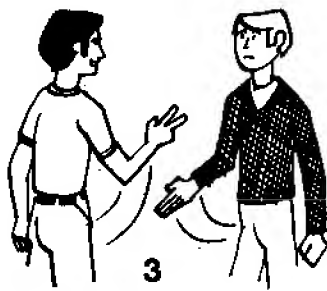
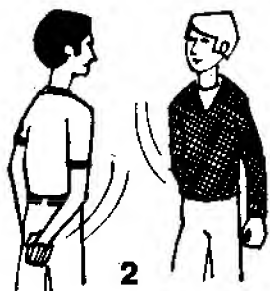
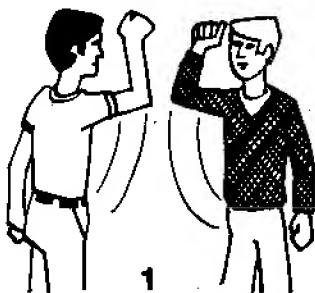


To ensure that each contestant shows his hand at the same time, chant together, 'one, two, three,' and show your hand on the final number.

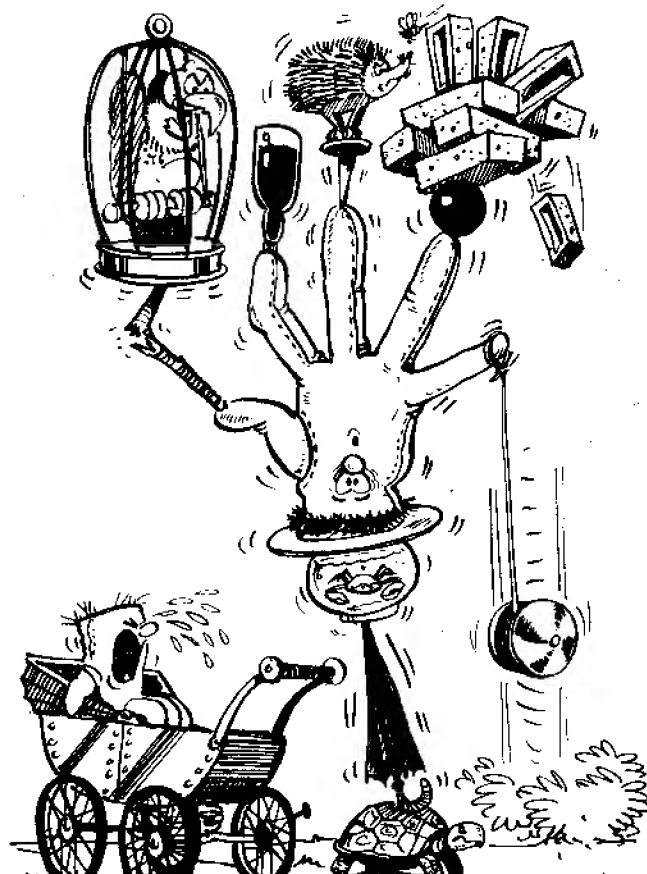
1 Swing your arm up at the count of 'one'.

2 Swing your arm behind your back on the count of 'two'.

3 Show your hand on the count of 'three'.



## A handful of ways to amuse a small child





## Round and round the garden

Very small children enjoy this bit of nonsense – you probably remember being amused by it yourself.

1 Take hold of baby's hand and run the tip of your finger very slowly around her palm saying, 'Round and round the garden, like a teddy bear ...'



2 '... one step ...' (walk your hand up baby's arm),

3 '... two step ...' (a little further up her arm),



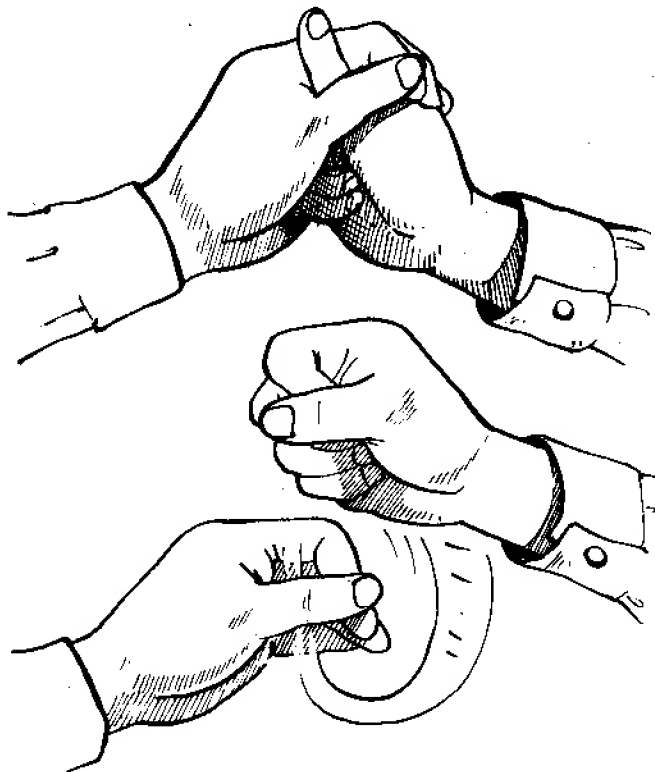
4 '... tickle you under there', as you tickle her under her arm.

## Trying to catch your thumb

Some small children like to see you try to catch your thumb.

1 Hold up your thumb and loop the fingers of your other hand around it. Stare hard at your thumb like a cat watching a mouse.

2 Then suddenly grab for it. Too late – it's gone. Better luck next time!



## Stealing baby's nose

1 Say to baby, 'I'm going to steal your nose,' and take hold of his nose between two of your knuckle joints.

2 Pull your hand away with your thumbtip peeping out between the knuckles. It will look very much like baby's nose. Pretend to put it back again afterwards.

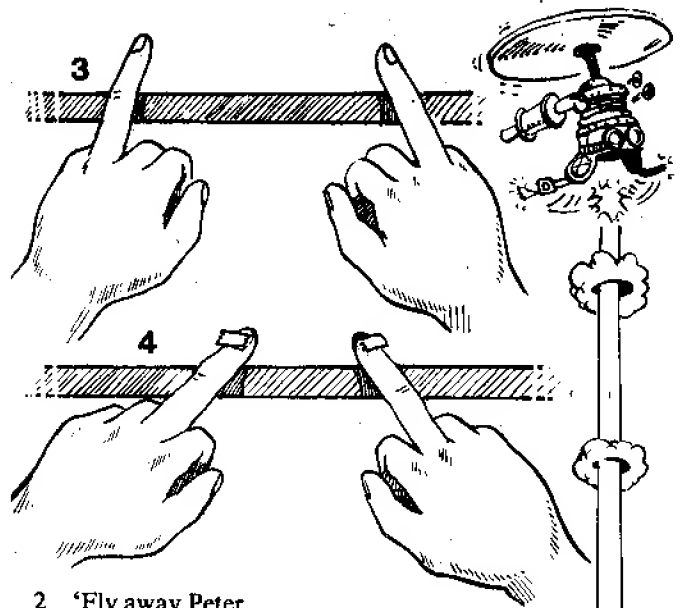
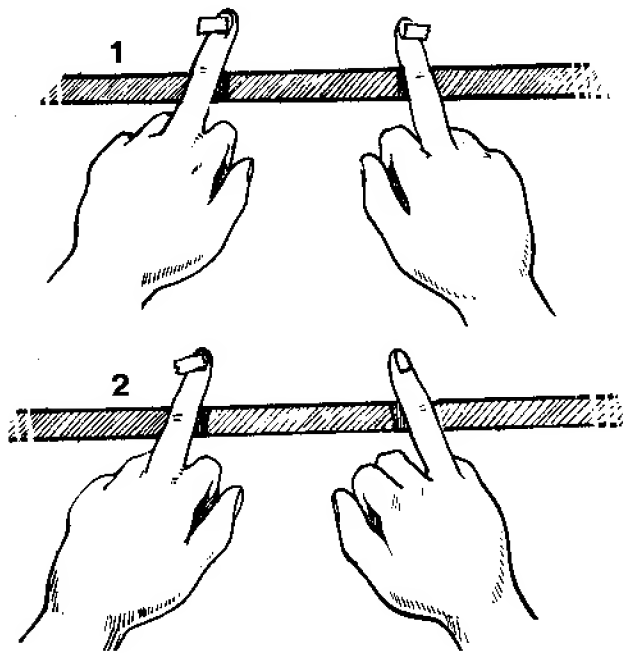
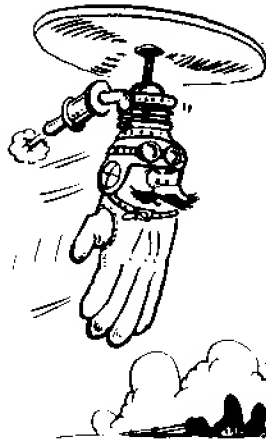


## Fly away Peter

1 Prepare two small scraps of paper. Stick one, with a lick, on the nail of each middle finger. Rest these fingers on the edge of a table and recite the following verse.

'Two little dicky birds sit on a wall

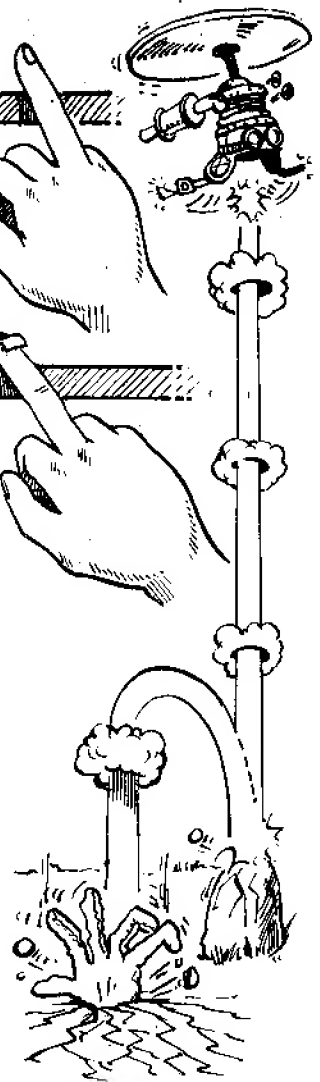
One named Peter, the other named Paul ...'



2 'Fly away Peter ... (Raise your right hand and return it immediately, but now with your third finger showing and your middle finger concealed.)

3 'Fly away Paul ...' (Now repeat step 2 with your left hand.)

4 'Come back Peter, come back Paul.' (Raise each hand in turn, switching fingers again to bring the middle fingers back into view.)

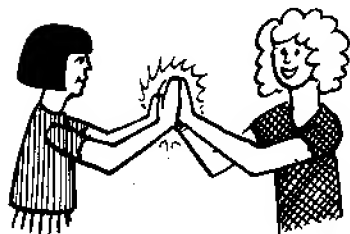
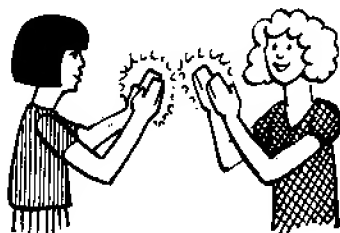


## Pat-a-cake

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man,  
Bake me a cake as fast as you can.  
Roll it and pat it and mark it with 'B',  
And put it in the oven for Baby and me.

This is a rhyme to clap hands to. Clap your own hands, or your partner's hands, in the sequence shown in the drawings, on the first syllable of each of the following phrases:

1 Pat-a-cake ...

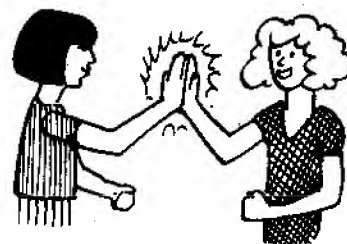


2 ... pat-a-cake ...

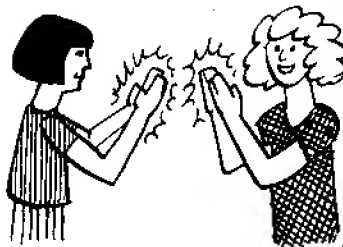


3 ... baker's ...

4 ... man, ...



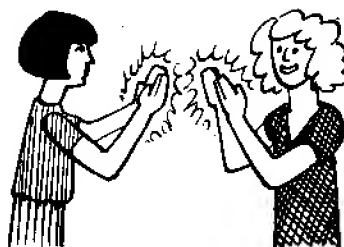
5 ... bake me a ...



6 ... cake as ...



7 ... fast as you can.



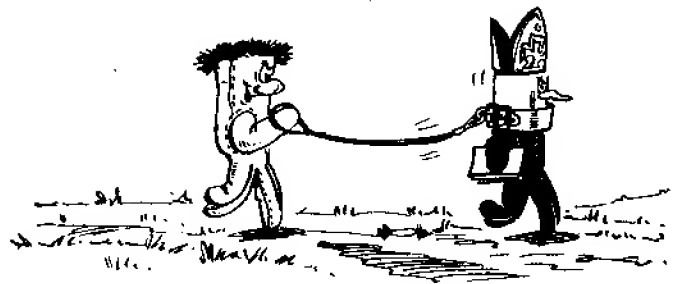
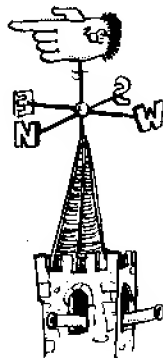
On the word 'fast' return to step 1 and start to repeat the sequence of hand movements. Recite the words and clap your hands faster and faster as you go along.

## This is the church

This is a finger rhyme – a rhyme which you can recite while performing certain hand movements at the same time. Here are the verses in full:

This is the church,  
This is the steeple.  
Open the doors  
And see all the people.

This is the minister  
Going upstairs,<  
Up in the pulpit  
Saying his prayers.

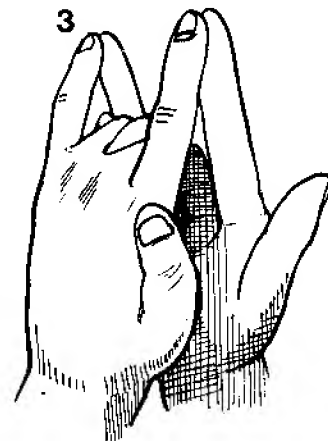
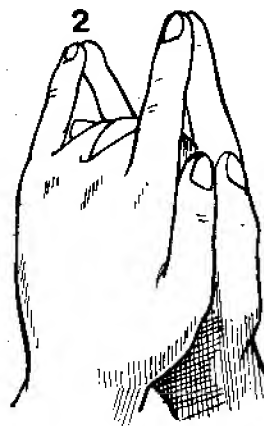
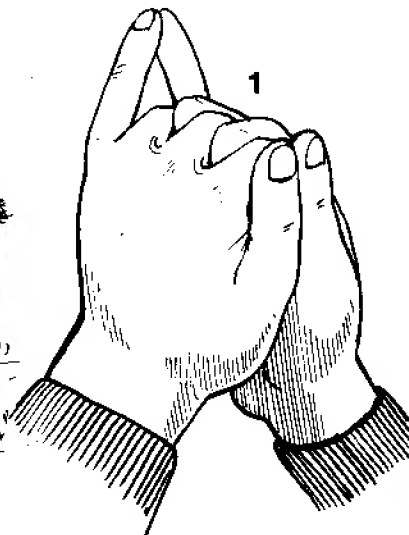
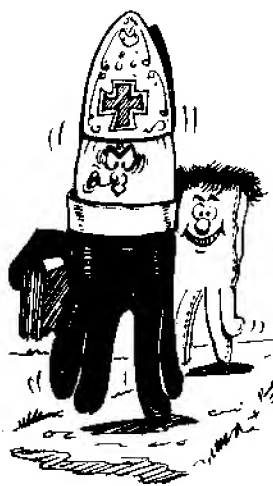


Here are the words again with the accompanying hand movements:

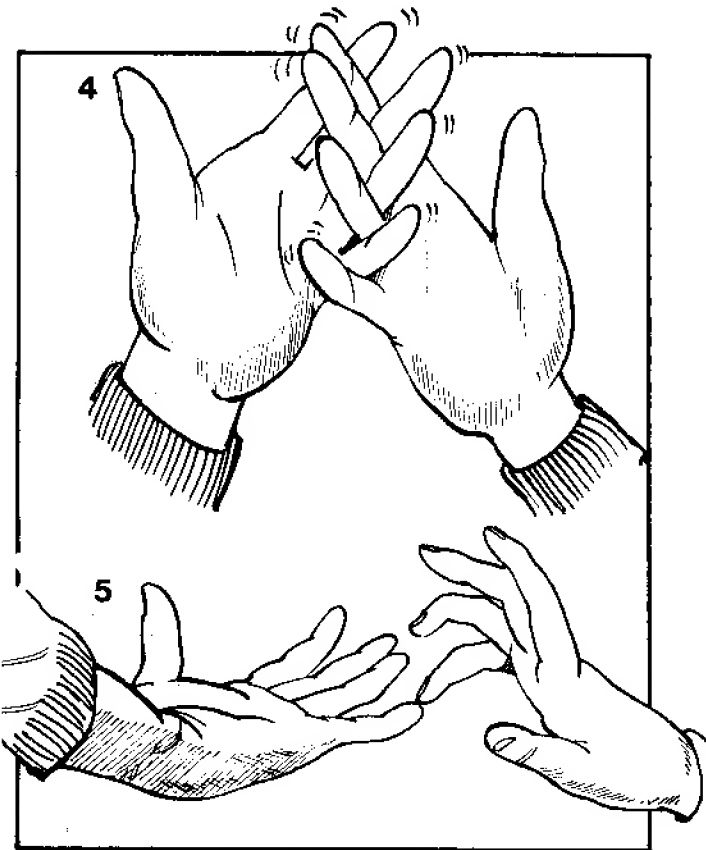
1 This is the church. (Bend the fingers of both hands and interlock them. Rest the tips of your little fingers together.)

2 This is the steeple. (Raise your forefingers and place the tips together to form the steeple.)

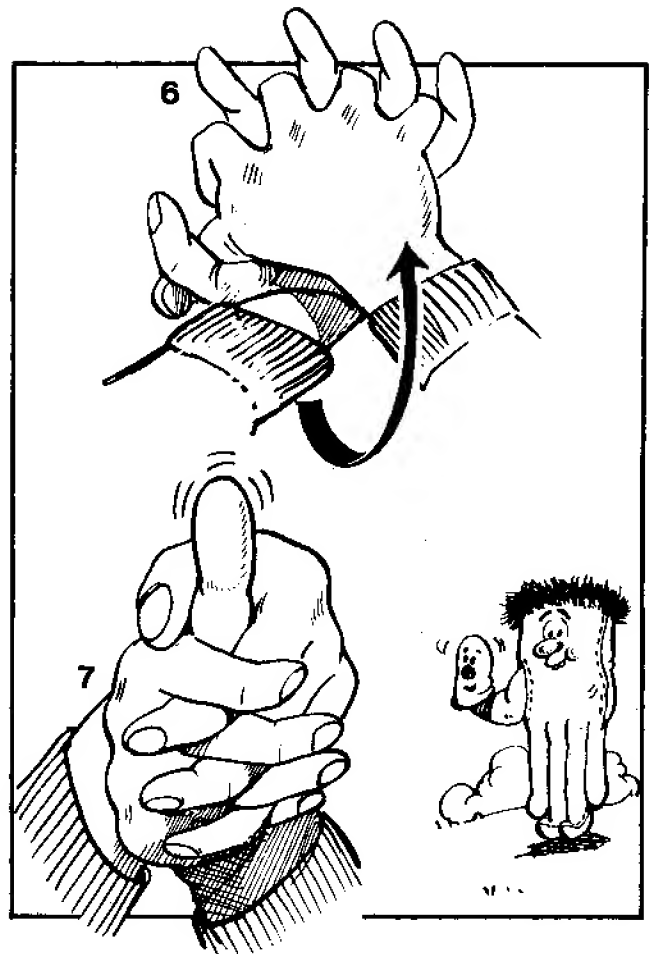
3 Open the doors.  
(Separate your thumbs.)



4 And see all the people. (Turn your hands over and wiggle your fingers.)



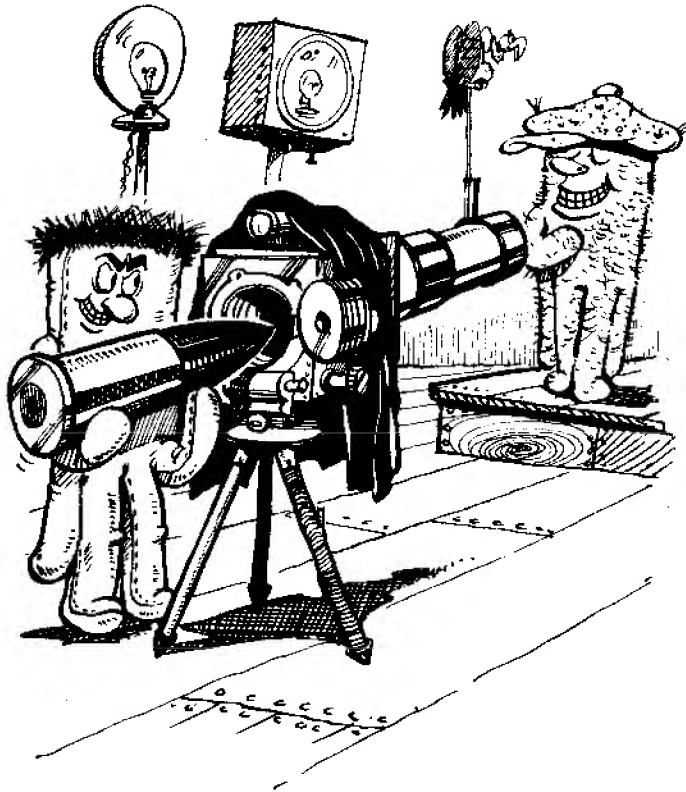
5 This is the minister going upstairs. (Separate your hands. Turn the left hand over and 'walk' the fingers of your right hand up the fingers of your left hand. Then clasp hands.)



6 Up in the pulpit. (Bring your clasped hands up between your forearms.)

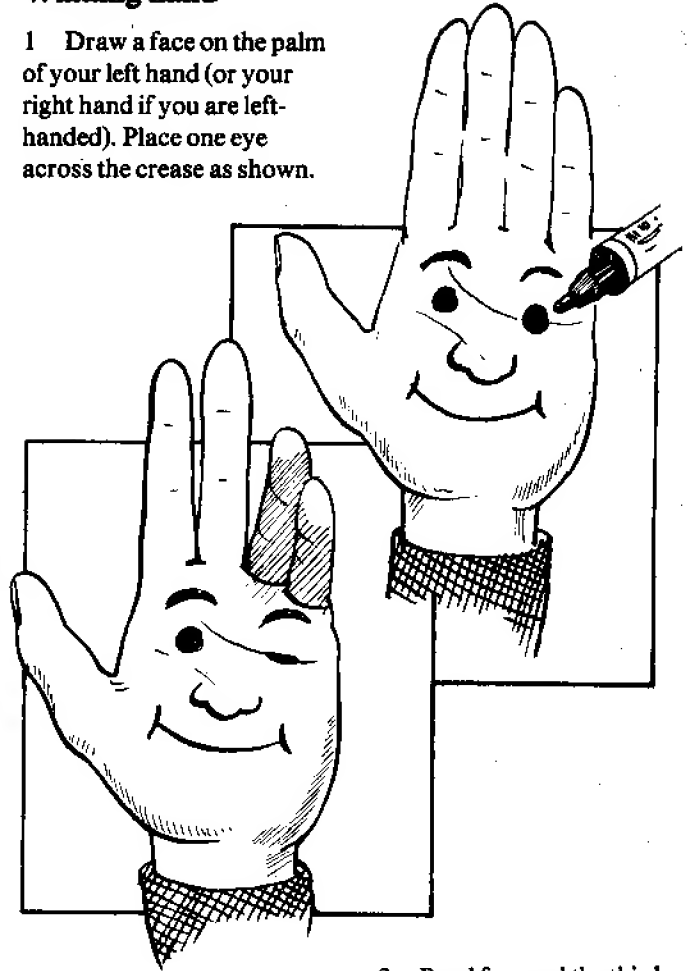
7 Saying his prayers. (Wiggle your thumb.)

# A handful of pictures and puppets



## Winking hand

1 Draw a face on the palm of your left hand (or your right hand if you are left-handed). Place one eye across the crease as shown.

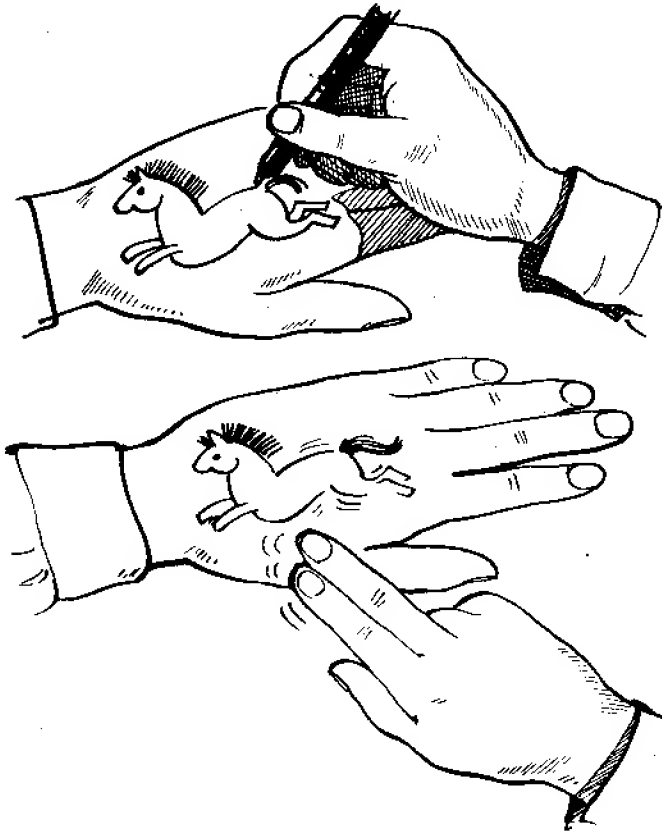


2 Bend forward the third and little fingers, and the face will wink at you.

## Galloping horse

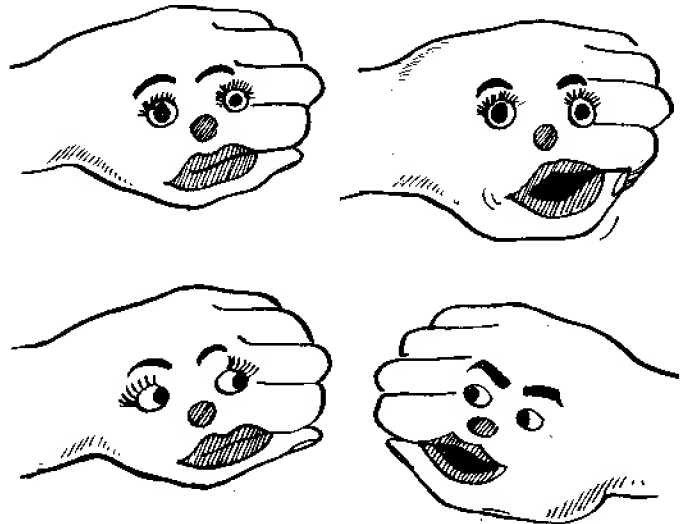
1 Draw a picture of a horse on the back of your hand with a felt or ball-point pen. Draw him so that his legs stand out at the front and rear.

2 Now touch the back of your hand lightly with a fingertip and make small circling motions. The skin will move and stretch, making the horse appear to gallop.



## Hand puppet

1 Draw a face on the back of your left hand. To make it look more lifelike, use coloured felt-tip pens – blue for the eyes, red for the mouth, black for the eyebrows. Make the lips large and place them between the thumb and forefinger. Draw a nose on the first knuckle above the mouth; then add eyes and eyebrows to complete the basic face.



2 Keep your thumbtip against the closed forefinger. Move the middle of your thumb to make the mouth open and close. The face will appear to talk and yawn.

3 Now try drawing a face on either hand so that the eyes are turned towards each other. You can make them tell jokes to each other!

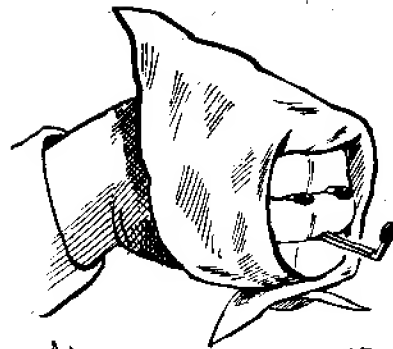
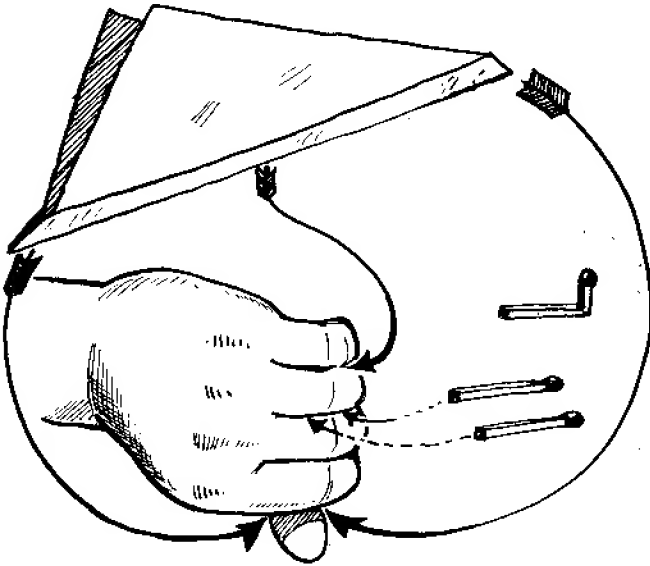


## Granny

To make this hand puppet you will need a paper handkerchief and two or three used matchsticks.

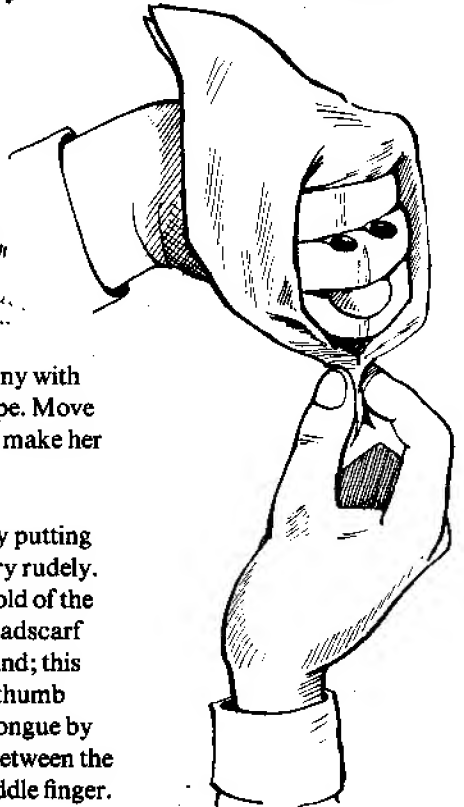
1 Fold the paper handkerchief diagonally in half to make a triangular shape, then turn the folded edge down. Make your hand into a fist with the thumb at the bottom. Tuck the turned-down edge of the handkerchief under your little finger and hold the two side ends with your thumb. Your fist is now beginning to resemble a head wearing a headscarf.

Two matchsticks can be used to form eyes. Slip these between your third and middle fingers. Break the third matchstick at its head end to form an L-shape – granny's pipe.



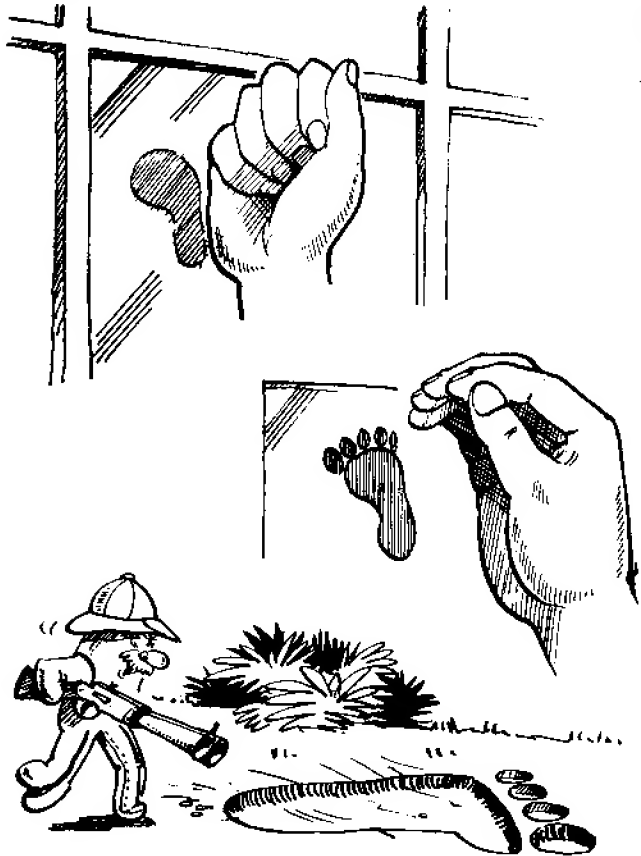
2 Above is granny with her matchstick pipe. Move your forefinger to make her talk.

3 Here is granny putting out her tongue very rudely. To do this, take hold of the two ends of the headscarf with your right hand; this releases your left thumb which forms the tongue by being poked out between the forefinger and middle finger.

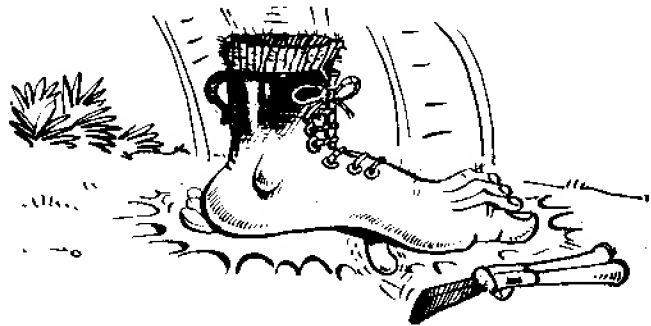


## Baby's footsteps

Have you noticed how moisture sometimes forms a misty surface on windows when it is a cold day? Perhaps you have enjoyed making pictures by tracing a fingertip through it. Here is something similar you can try when next you find a window covered in condensation.



- 1 Press the heel of your fist against the glass.
- 2 Bunch your fingertips and press them above this mark.
- 3 You now have what looks like a tiny footprint. Make several footprints, left and right, by using both hands. It will look as though your baby brother or sister had somehow managed to walk up the window!



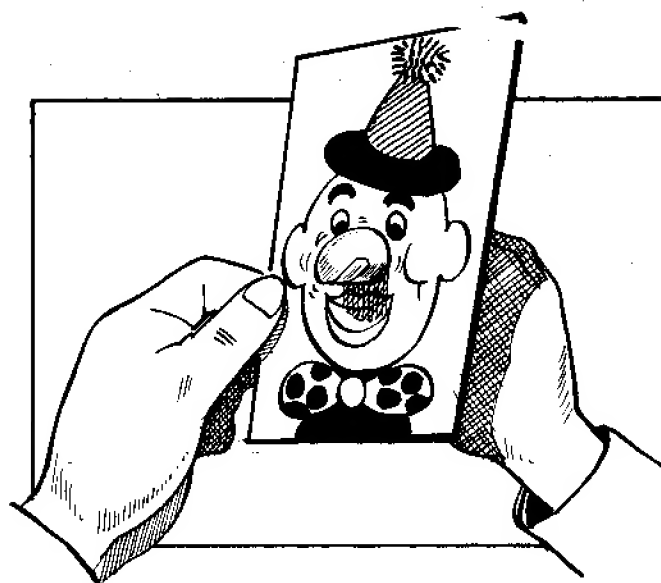
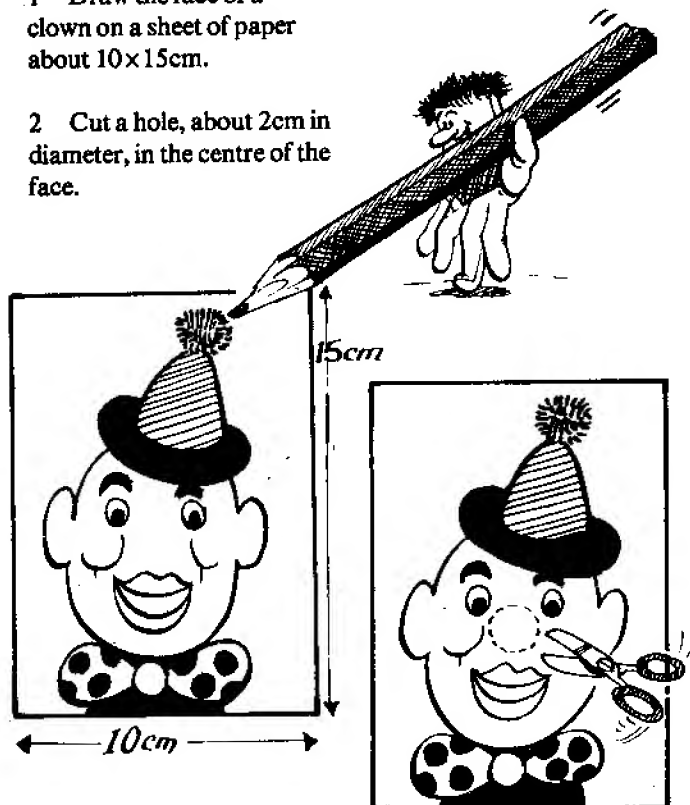
## Finger and thumb pictures

It's fun making pictures in which your thumb, or one or more of your fingers, appears as part of the design. If you have paper, pencil, scissors and ruler handy, try this for a start:

### Clown

1 Draw the face of a clown on a sheet of paper about 10×15cm.

2 Cut a hole, about 2cm in diameter, in the centre of the face.



3 Put your thumb through the hole from the back, and suddenly your clown has a fleshy, life-like nose. Wiggle your thumb to make his nose twitch.

4 If you want to give your friends a surprise, turn the paper over and write instructions on the back, such as, 'Put thumb in here and turn paper over.' Pass the paper to your friends with the instructions uppermost.

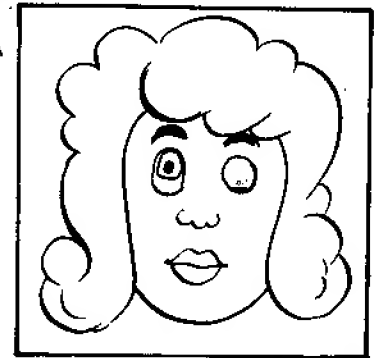
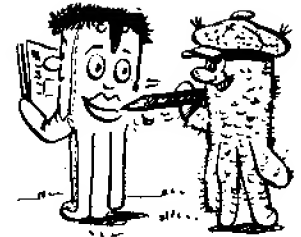
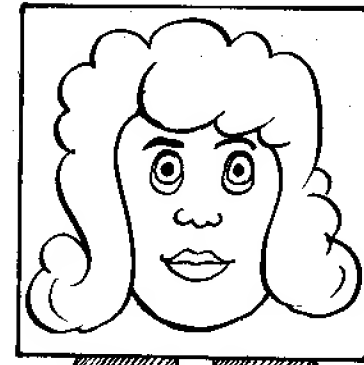
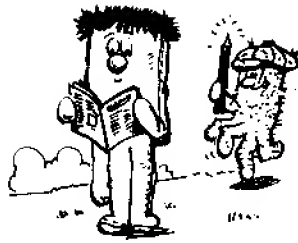


### Winking girl

1 Draw the face of a girl on a piece of paper. Cut out eye holes of about 2cm diameter.

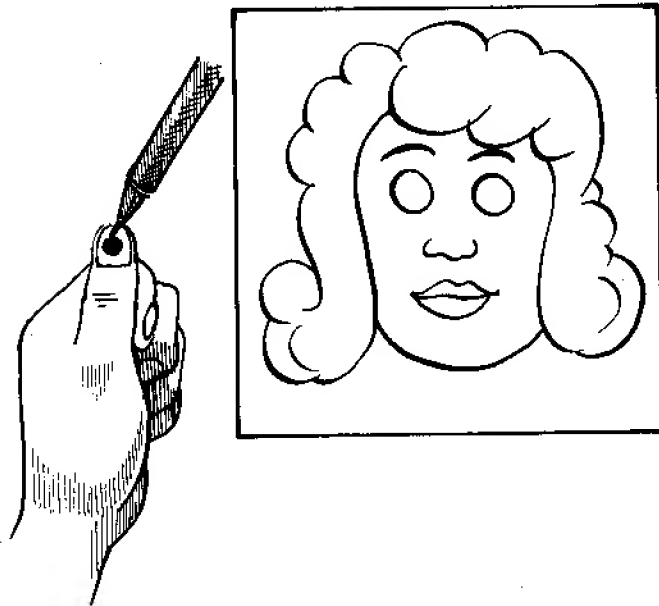
2 Next draw a large dot on each of your thumbnails.

3 Holding your fists like the one below, slip your thumbs into the holes to form eyes. (See the top picture opposite.)



4 Bring the tip of your right thumb down by rotating your thumb like this ...

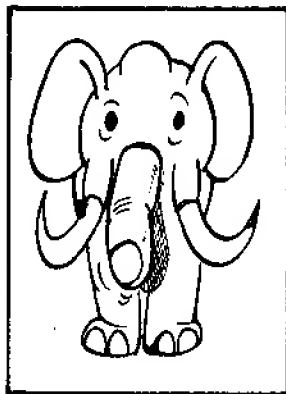
5 ... and the girl will wink. If you find this trick difficult to perform because the paper moves, get a friend to hold it for you.



**Three more finger pictures**  
Here are some further ideas for finger pictures:

- 1 One finger is used to make an elephant's trunk.
- 2 Use two fingers to make the paddling legs of a child.
- 3 Use two fingers to make the devil's horns.

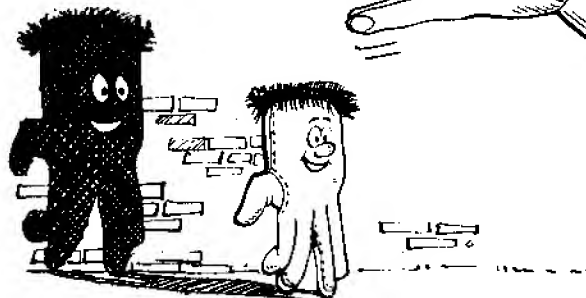
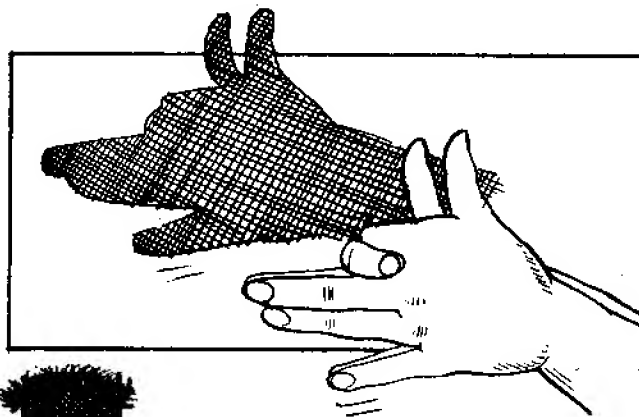
Try to think of some more ideas to use in this way.



## Hand shadows

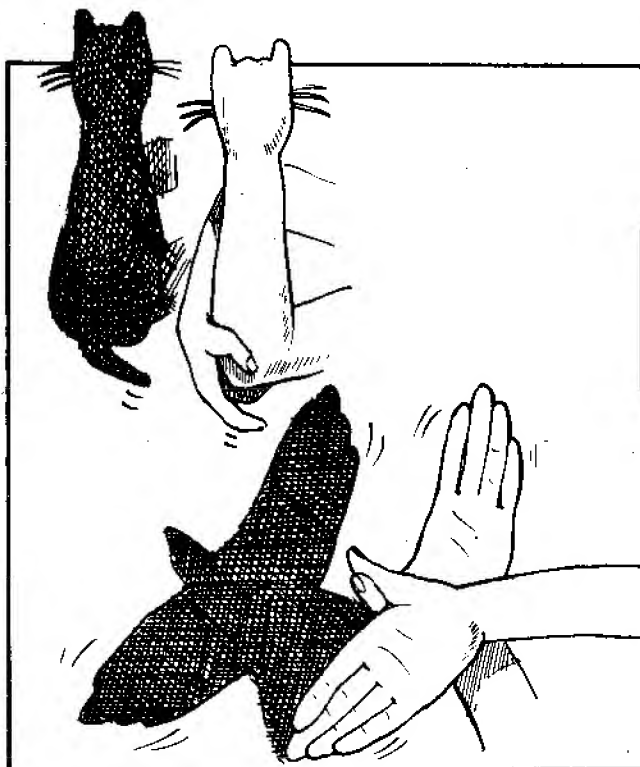
It's fun making pictures by casting shadows of your hands against the wall of a room. It is best to do this in the evening with not more than one light on; a desk lamp or bedside lamp will provide a suitable light. Stand between the lamp and the wall at a point which allows you to throw a strong shadow.

- 1 Dog: place the palms of your hands together and curl your forefingers. Stick up your thumbs to represent the dog's ears and move your little fingers up and down to make him bark.



**2 Cat:** your left fist forms the cat's head; raise the knuckle joints of your forefinger and little finger to represent ears. Cup your right hand around your elbow and stick out a finger to form his tail. You can hold a few blades of grass in your left hand to represent the cat's whiskers.

**3 Bird in flight:** turn your hands palm upwards and link your thumbs. Bend your fingers at the knuckles to make the bird's wings flap.



**4 Swan:** one hand forms the swan's head; hold the first two fingers with your thumb and let the remaining two fingers form the beak. The other hand forms the wing.



**5 Bull:** with the thumb and forefinger of your right hand, form the bull's horns. Hold your other hand at an angle, so that the shadow of your fingers is fore-shortened, to form the bull's nose.

6 Elephant: holding your left hand palm down, stick out the forefinger and little finger to represent tusks and stretch the two middle fingers down to represent the elephant's trunk. Place your right hand on top, fingertips to knuckles, to shape the top of his head.

